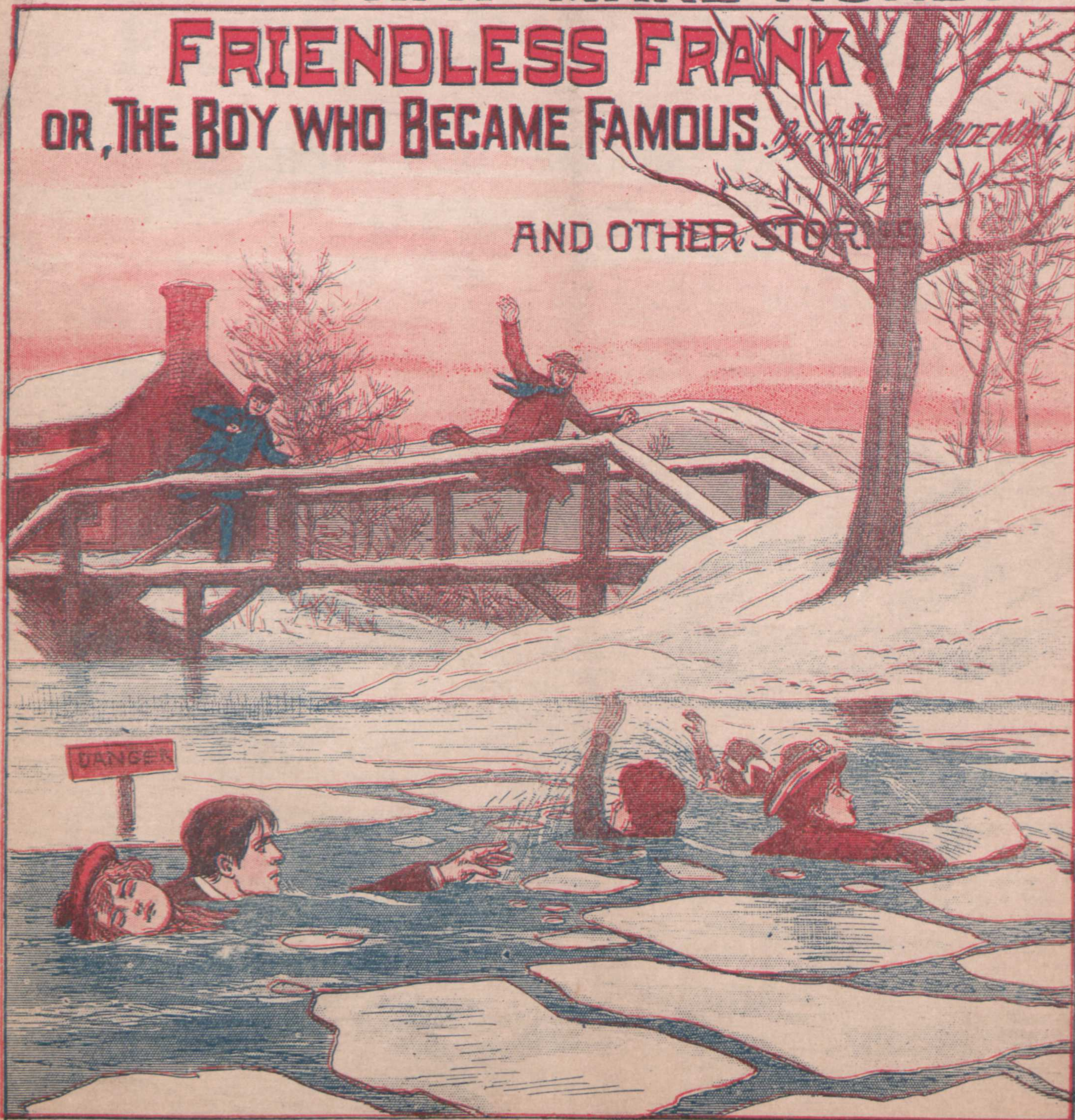


FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

FRIENDLESS FRANK!
OR, THE BOY WHO BECAME FAMOUS. BY A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



As Frank came to the surface with the unconscious girl in his arms a succession of shrill screams struck upon his ears. Flora's companions, in their anxiety for her safety, had ventured too far on the treacherous ice and had broken through.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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FRIENDLESS FRANK

OR

THE BOY WHO BECAME FAMOUS

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH INTRODUCES FRIENDLESS FRANK.

Nature's mantle of snow lay thickly upon the only street that the little village of Shadowbrook could boast of, and upon the surrounding landscape as well.

The air was full of flying flakes, swept hither and thither by the chill evening wind that souged through the leafless trees, standing like grim sentries on either side of the thoroughfare which divided Shadowbrook in two unequal parts.

Lights were shining like glowworms from the windows of the stores, and of the scattered houses, and the smoke that swirled from the chimneys showed that warm fires glowed within.

It was not a cheerful night to be abroad in, and the deserted aspect of the little village showed that the people were hugging the shelter of their firesides.

Through the gathering dusk a lonesome-looking boy, neatly but poorly clad, was wearily plodding along the county road that led into the village street.

His well-worn shoes sank deep into the soft snow at every step, but, with his hands thrust into the recesses of his jacket pockets, he trudged ahead with a dogged persistence that no fatigue could conquer.

Presently from behind him came the jingling sound of sleighbells, mingled with youthful chattering and laughter, and out of the gloom burst a team of spanking bays drawing a large and handsome sled filled with happy and warmly-clad girls and boys.

The lonely lad drew aside to let the sled pass, but his foot catching in some obstruction, he staggered and nearly fell on his face.

The passengers on the sled noticed his predicament and laughed uproariously.

That is, all but one—a lovely, red-checked miss, attired in a fur-trimmed, close-fitting jacket and natty fur cap, who sat on the elevated front seat with the driver, a handsomely-dressed, consequential-looking boy.

This boy, thinking to frighten and confuse the solitary pedestrian, guided the sled toward him, and snapped the long lash of his whip about the young stranger's ears.

No doubt he thought this very amusing, and probably most of the others did, too.

Generally there are two sides to a joke.

In this case there was nothing funny in the driver's conduct to the boy in the snow; in fact, a very serious ending would have come to the incident but for the prompt action of the pretty girl in the fur cap.

She saw the lonely boy's foot had been caught and was held by something under the snow, and that he was in great peril of being run down by the sleigh.

"Turn out, quick, Herbert Leach!" she cried, springing up and reaching for the reins. "You'll be over the boy!"

"Ho!" chuckled Herbert. "Don't you believe it. Let the beggar get out of the road."

"He can't. Don't you see his leg is caught?"

Herbert laughed jeeringly and made no attempt to alter his course.

The pretty miss, however, was equal to the emergency.

Before the self-willed driver suspected her intention, she reached across, seized the off-rein and pulled so hard upon it that the horses turned sharply to one side and the sled missed the boy's leg by a very narrow margin, so narrow, in fact, that his hat was brushed off by the elbow of one of the girls as the vehicle swept by.

Most of the young people in the body of the sled now realized that an accident had been averted by the presence of mind of Flora Montgomery, the belle of the party, and they turned with one accord and looked back at the lad, who had just succeeded in releasing his foot from the hidden obstruction.

"What did you do that for, Flora?" exclaimed Herbert Leach, testily, as he recovered the rein and drove on.

"Because I didn't want you to run over the poor boy," replied the girl, with some spirit.

"Pooh! I wasn't going to run over him. I just wanted to give him a scare."

"You'd have run over him if I hadn't pulled on the rein," replied Flora, decisively. "His foot was caught by something under the snow and he couldn't get out of the way."

"How do you know it was?" growled Leach.

"I saw him tugging to free it."

"He was just making believe in order to make us turn out for him," grumbled the driver.

"No such thing, Herbert Leach. I was looking right at him and I know," replied Flora, in a positive tone. "Isn't that so, girls?" she added, turning around to the others in the sled.

"Yes, yes," chorused the girls.

The boys in the sled said nothing, but one or two of them thought a lot.

The sled was soon out of sight of the boy behind, who had started ahead again upon his toilsome journey.

As he advanced well into the village the snow came down faster and faster until he resembled a walking snow figure.

He took to the side path, where walking was a little easier and looked eagerly to the right and to the left for some place where he thought he might seek shelter from the night and the growing snowstorm.

At length he came abreast of a building that was evidently a general store.

He mounted the porch and looked in at one of the windows.

"I'll have to put up here," he said to himself. "This seems

to be the most likely place in the village. If they won't let me stop I don't know what I shall do. I can't walk any further, and it would be a pretty hard man who would thrust me out on a night like this."

Thus speaking, he shook the snow from his hat and garments as well as he could, opened the door and entered.

The warmth of the store felt grateful, while the sight of half a cheese, a box of crackers, and sundry other eatables, made him sensible of the fact that he was ravenously hungry.

There was nobody in the place but the storekeeper, who sat by the stove toasting his toes and reading the village paper, issued from the press that afternoon.

He turned his head and regarded the boy, who he saw was a stranger in Shadowbrook, with no little curiosity.

"Well," he said, cheerfully, "what can I do for you, young man?"

"Can I get something to eat and stop here to-night?" asked the boy, respectfully. "I don't know where else to go." to go."

"Hum!" replied the man, whose name was Cyrus Packard. "You look cold and tired. Come over to the stove and warm yourself."

The boy accepted the invitation with alacrity, and standing close to the stove put one red, wet shoe on the iron in front of the grate alternately.

"What's your name?" asked the storekeeper.

"Frank Fairfax. But, as I've had very few friends in my life, the boys in the places I came from nicknamed me 'Friendless Frank,' sir."

"You look as if you'd done some trampin' to-day," continued Mr. Packard.

"I have."

"Come from the next village, perhaps—I mean Parkersville?" said the storekeeper, inquiringly. "Or did you come from the opposite direction?" he added.

"I passed through Parkersville at two o'clock."

"Passed through Parkersville? Then you've come further than that?" said Mr. Packard, in some surprise, for he knew that the roads and the weather were not favorable for pedestrianism.

"Yes, sir. I left Bardstown this morning at six."

"You don't mean to say you've walked all the way from Bardstown to this place to-day?" exclaimed the storekeeper, not a little astonished.

"I did."

"Didn't any one give you a lift along the road?"

The boy shook his head.

"Why don't you haul up a chair and sit down?"

The young stranger followed Mr. Packard's suggestion.

"You look to be a stout, healthy boy, but how you ever had the grit to foot it from Bardstown to this village in the condition of the roads gets me. Evidently you have pluck and determination. Where are you bound for?"

"No place in particular, though I expect to fetch up at Buffalo."

"No place in particular, eh? Are you out on the world on your own hook?"

"Yes, sir."

"Parents dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"No relatives or friends to call on?"

"No, sir."

"How old are you?"

"Seventeen."

"Any objection to anchoring in this village a while?"

"I don't know what you mean by that," replied the boy.

"Well, I want a boy to tend store and do chores around the place. It seems to me you'd fill the bill all right. I'll give you eight dollars a month and your keep. What do you say?"

"I don't think I'd care to stay long in a small place like this," said the lad. "I'm looking for something with a future. I'm willing to take the job for a while, say for three or four months, if you're willing to hire me that way. I won't say but I'd stay longer, but I don't want to guarantee that I will."

"All right," answered the storekeeper. "I'll hire you on those terms, provided you promise to give me reasonable notice of your intention to pull up stakes."

"I'll make that promise."

"And I believe you'll keep it," said Mr. Packard, in a tone of satisfaction. "You look like an honest and straightforward lad."

"I hope I am, sir."

"I am satisfied that you are a worker, too, not that you'll

be overworked in the store. I like to see a boy attend to his business right up to the handle—show some energy and interest in what he's doing. The last boy I had always went about his work as if he was tired. He tried my patience sorely. You'll find I'll treat you all right. You'll have time for recreation. I believe in that. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. I don't mean to give you any excuse to be dull. I am sure you're not of that kind, anyway. You talk like a boy who has received a very fair education, and your manners, I notice, are respectful and polite. My customers are sure to like you."

"You can depend that while I'm with you I'll do my best to suit you," said the boy, earnestly.

"I am satisfied you will. Now I must let Miss Packard know that you've come to supper and are goin' to stop with us regularly."

Thus speaking, Mr. Packard left the store, while Frank Fairfax eagerly awaited the summons to the supper table.

CHAPTER II.

FRANK HAS TROUBLE WITH HERBERT LEACH.

Frank had accepted the job in the store chiefly because he was favorably impressed with Mr. Packard, and incidentally because he found it hard to be thrown on his own resources during the winter season.

He had been born and brought up in New York City, where he had attended the public school—perhaps we should say schools, since he had picked his education up in many of them, for his parents were always on the move, it seemed to him.

After his father's death he accompanied his mother to Rockdale Center, a small village in Sullivan County, where he was put to work with a small farmer.

The farmer kept his nose to the grindstone, and did not treat him any too well, but his mother, whom he did not see very often, needed the small wages he earned, and so, like a good son, he stuck it out.

A few months before the opening of this story his mother died.

Frank then began to consider the advisability of leaving his hard taskmaster.

The farmer, suspecting his intentions, and not wishing to lose so faithful and industrious a worker, watched him closely, keeping back his pay on one excuse or another.

Finally the boy's patience gave out.

He told the farmer he was going to leave him and demanded his wages.

The agriculturist refused to ante up unless his hired boy promised to stay on the farm.

Frank consulted the village lawyer, with the result that he got what was due him, and then he started out to walk to the nearest railroad town and take a train for Buffalo, where he had an idea he would be able to get work.

He carried his money and other worldly possessions in an old grip, but this was taken from him by three tramps who held him up on the highway, and so the boy found that if he expected to reach Buffalo he would have to tramp it as best he could.

And so for a week or over he had been making the best progress he could under the most adverse circumstances, but he was a lad of grit and perseverance and stuck to his task for all he was worth.

The snowstorm, which had overtaken him after he left Parkersville, was rather a dampener to his spirits, and he was feeling pretty blue when he saw the lights of Shadowbrook in the distance.

By the time he reached the village he was pretty thoroughly fagged out, as well as a bit downhearted over the prospects for the morrow, consequently when he received the unexpected offer of a situation from Mr. Packard he eagerly accepted it.

When Frank went in to supper and was introduced to Mrs. Packard he liked her fully as well as he did her husband.

They both treated the friendless boy with a consideration that won his heart, and he determined to leave no stone unturned to please them.

After the meal he returned to the store with Mr. Packard, who had been once or twice called out to wait on a customer, and the storekeeper proceeded to instruct the boy in the prices of the various goods he kept on sale, which were of the usual varied character to be met with in a small country store.

While they were thus employed half a dozen of the villagers dropped in one by one and seated themselves around the stove.

These were some of the patrons who made it their nightly practice to gather at the store to swap stories, talk politics, drink cider and smoke pipes and cigars, and it would have taken more than an ordinary snowstorm to have kept these kindred spirits away.

After Mr. Packard had drilled his new clerk for something like an hour he told the boy he could go to bed.

Frank was glad to avail himself of this permission, and after Mrs. Packard had shown him to the small and comfortable room he was to occupy, he got into bed as soon as he could, and was soon in the land of dream.

He was called next morning at six, and lost no time in tumbling out.

The storm had ceased, but the landscape far and near was whiter than ever, and the snow was pretty deep in places.

Mr. Packard provided him with a pair of stout boots and other things that he actually needed, charging them against his account.

After attending to some chores for Mrs. Packard he helped open the store.

The storekeeper was also the postmaster of the village, and after breakfast Frank was told to harness the horse to a light sleigh and go to Glendale, a town on the railroad about eight miles away, for the mail bag.

He carried a bag with the outgoing mail with him, and returned in something over two hours.

After that he accompanied the storekeeper on his round in the sleigh delivering such supplies as Mr. Packard had received orders for on the preceding day, and taking orders from the customers for next day's delivery.

He made a careful note of the different houses at which he stopped, so as to remember them again and the people who lived there.

At the same time he delivered any mail that had come that morning for these customers.

As there was only one other general store in Shadowbrook, and Mr. Packard had the bulk of the village trade, his tour of the place was almost equivalent to a rural free delivery, although that system was not at that time officially in vogue.

After dinner Frank remained in the store to put up orders and wait on any customer who dropped in.

About three o'clock Herbert Leach and a companion entered the store to post some letters for his father, who was a lawyer and justice of the peace.

Herbert also wanted some cigarettes, and Mr. Packard kept a particular brand on hand for his special consumption.

Herbert Leach considered himself the most important boy in the village, and his father the most important man next to Edward Montgomery, president of the Shadowbrook Bank.

He lived in a fine house, in what was considered the aristocratic section, and he wore the finest clothes of any boy in the place.

Squire Leach was considered to be nearly as well off in worldly goods as Mr. Montgomery, who was known as the rich man of the village.

He was a pompous-looking man, with a "touch-me-not" air that made him somewhat unpopular among the inhabitants, but the possession of money and a certain amount of political influence with the county leaders of his party covered up his shortcomings, and the people took their hats off to him.

Herbert was very like his father in more ways than one.

He put on a great many airs, and assumed a patronizing attitude toward those he looked upon as his inferiors.

There were not over half a dozen village boys that he was willing to meet on a plane of equality, and even these he would have lorded over, only they wouldn't stand for it, so he was obliged to haul in his horns to remain on friendly terms with them.

When Herbert and his companion walked up to the showcase where the cigars were kept, Frank came over to wait on him.

Then the young dude noticed for the first time that the storekeeper had a new assistant, and a stranger to the village, at that.

Frank also recognized him as the youth who had nearly ridden him down in the road the evening previous, and snapped his whiplash about his ears.

"Hello! Where did you come from?" asked Herbert,

superciliously, regarding the new clerk with an unfriendly stare.

"What can I do for you?" asked Frank, taking no notice of the question, nor of the almost insulting way in which it was spoken.

Herbert, feeling that he was entitled to a certain amount of deference from the common people, as he termed those who had to work for a living, was not at all pleased with the air of quiet independence assumed by Mr. Packard's new clerk.

"I asked you where you came from?" he said, haughtily.

"What difference does it make to you where I came from?" replied Frank. "If you wish anything I'll be pleased to serve you."

"When I ask you a question I want you to answer it, do you understand?" snorted Leach, glaring at Frank.

"I'll answer any question connected with this store," replied Frank, quietly; "but as you are a stranger to me I don't propose to answer questions of a personal nature."

"Ashamed to tell where you came from, I suppose," sneered Herbert.

"No, I am not ashamed, but I consider it none of your business."

Frank's eyes flashed, and the words came straight from the shoulder.

Leach gasped, while his companion grinned with delight.

"I shall report your insulting conduct to Mr. Packard," replied Herbert, in a rage. "If he doesn't discharge you I'll get my mother to withdraw her trade from the store."

The storekeeper, hearing Herbert's voice raised in a high, angry key, came forward to find out what was wrong.

"Look here, Mr. Packard," said Leach, "this new clerk of yours has insulted me. I wish you to discharge him at once."

"What's the trouble, Frank?" asked Mr. Packard, turning to his assistant.

Frank explained all that had passed between himself and Leach, and referred to Herbert's companion as a witness.

"Has my clerk stated the matter correctly, Master Leach?" asked the storekeeper.

"He has, and I don't propose to stand for such talk," fumed Herbert.

"Well, don't you think that he had a right to refuse to answer a question of a personal nature from one who is a stranger to him?" said Mr. Packard, mildly, for he thoroughly understood the youth with whom he was dealing.

"Well, he needn't have put on airs about it. The idea of telling me that it was none of my business! I'm not in the habit of being addressed in such an offensive way."

"I am sure he meant no offense. If he knew who you were he would probably have given you a different answer. You must understand that he's a complete stranger in the village," said the storekeeper, in a conciliatory tone. "You want to make some allowance for that fact."

"Very well," said Herbert, loftily. "If he will apologize I'll let it go this time."

"What ought I to apologize for?" said Frank, failing to see how he was in the wrong. "If I asked you where you came from you would consider it impertinence on my part, wouldn't you?"

"Certainly, I should. But there is a big difference between you and me."

"I fail to see it," replied Frank, coolly. "We are both boys of about the same age."

"That has nothing to do with it. I belong to one of the best families in the village. My father is rich and influential, while you're only a common boy who has to earn your own living."

"The fact that I have to earn my living doesn't give you the right to address me in an insulting way. When you came to the counter I asked you in a polite way how I could serve you. Why didn't you tell me, so I could have waited on you?"

"If you had answered my question in a respectful manner I should have told you what I wanted."

"If you will tell me now what you want I will get it for you, if it is in the store. In the line of business I shall be always glad to wait on you."

"Well, hereafter see that you treat me with the respect I am entitled to. I want two packages of cigarettes," said Herbert, laying thirty cents on the top of the showcase.

"Shall I wrap them up for you?" asked Frank, after taking two flat pasteboard boxes from the shelf behind him.

"It isn't necessary," said Leach, opening one of the boxes.

"Have a smoke, Ralph?" tendering the box to his companion.

His friend helped himself to one, both boys lit their cigarettes and then walked out of the store.

"I hope you don't blame me in this matter, Mr. Packard," said Frank, after they were gone.

"Not at all. Young Leach is inclined to carry matters with a high hand, and it is necessary to handle him with gloves. His father is well off, and has something of a political pull. He is one of my best customers, and from motives of policy, it is advisable to let Herbert have his own way."

"I shall certainly treat him politely as long as he doesn't insult me," replied Frank. "But I won't allow any boy, or man, either, to sit on my neck simply because it suits his humor to do so."

The new clerk spoke firmly, and he meant every word he said, and perhaps Mr. Packard respected the manly spirit that prompted the boy's attitude.

CHAPTER III.

FRIENDLESS FRANK MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF FLORA MONTGOMERY.

Ten minutes later a sleigh stopped in front of the door and a pretty girl with a piquant air sprang out and tripped into the store.

This was Flora Montgomery, daughter of the president of the Shadowbrook Bank.

Frank recognized her as the girl who sat on the front seat of the sled the night before, and whose quick action in turning the vehicle aside had saved him from being run down.

Mr. Packard was opening a box of goods at the rear end of the store, so Frank stepped forward to wait on her.

Flora walked to the counter where the dry and fancy goods were kept.

The moment her eyes rested on the new clerk she recognized him as the boy the sleighing party had passed on the road.

"In what way can I serve you, miss?" asked Frank, much impressed with the girl's attractive face and figure.

Flora mentioned what she had come for, and while the boy was getting it the young lady remarked to herself that he was a very good-looking and gentlemanly young fellow—rather an improvement on the average Shadowbrook clerk.

"You are a stranger in the village, aren't you?" she said, as she fingered the goods that Frank had spread out for her inspection.

"Yes, miss," Fairfax answered.

"My name is Flora Montgomery," she said. "Might I ask yours?"

"Frank Fairfax, but I've been called 'Friendless Frank' by my acquaintances."

"You will make friends here, I am sure. Aren't you the boy that we nearly ran over last evening on the outskirts of the village?"

"Yes, miss. And I am very much obliged to you for saving me. If you hadn't turned the horses aside so promptly I'm afraid my leg would have been broken."

"Don't mention it. The sled shouldn't have gone so close to you. There was plenty of room for us to pass, but Herbert Leach wanted to give you a scare, and he's very self-willed. I was very angry with him for acting the way he did. I'm thankful I was able to save you from being struck."

"I'm very grateful to you, Miss Montgomery," replied Frank, earnestly. "If it is ever in my power to return that favor you may be sure I will do it."

"Oh, you mustn't consider yourself under any obligation to me, Mr. Fairfax," she answered, with a charming smile. "I simply did what Herbert ought to have done himself. It would have been very unfortunate if you had been hurt. Are you a relative of Mr. Packard's?"

"No. I just stopped here last night on my way to Buffalo, and he offered me this situation. I was glad to accept it, for I had no money, and walking is a serious matter when there is a foot or two of snow on the road."

"You don't mean to say that you expected to walk all the way to Buffalo?" she exclaimed, opening her pretty eyes very wide.

"I did, but I've changed my mind now."

"Gracious!" she ejaculated. "How far have you walked already?"

"From Rockdale Center, about seventy miles."

"I don't see how you could do it at this season of the year."

"When I started out I had no intention of walking, but I was held up on the road to the railroad station by three tramps, who took my grip, containing my money and everything I possessed in the world. That left me flat broke in every way."

"You were unfortunate, weren't you?"

"Yes."

"Haven't you any relatives or friends to apply to for aid?"

"I haven't a friend or relative in the world, miss," he replied, soberly.

"How sad! But you are sure to make friends here if you stay in this store."

"Perhaps. Mr. and Mrs. Packard are very good to me, considering that they know nothing about me. They won't lose anything by it. I never go back on anybody who treats me kindly. Is this the goods you want? You must excuse me if I'm not very expert. It will take me a few days to get the hang of things in the store."

"Yes, this is what I want. Cut me off six yards and charge it to my father. I will take it with me."

Frank cut off the required length, folded the goods and wrapped it up.

"Can I show you anything else?" he asked.

"You might show me what you have in pearl buttons."

Frank made a note of the first sale and then brought all the different kinds of pearl buttons there were in the store and set them before her.

There was nothing among them that she fancied.

"If you could tell me just about what you want I'll try to get them in Glendale to-morrow when I go for the mail," said Frank.

"You are very kind, Mr. Fairfax, but I couldn't think of giving you so much trouble."

"It is no trouble at all, Miss Montgomery. Even if it was I should gladly do it for you in consideration of what you have already done for me."

"Pray don't think about that little matter any more," she replied, beaming on him. "It is hardly worth mentioning."

"I think differently. I shall remember it as long as I live. Shall I look up some pearl buttons for you?"

She hesitated.

"Perhaps Mr. Packard might not care to bother about such a little thing," she said.

"I am sure that Mr. Packard would be pleased to accommodate you in any way. Your father is our best customer, I believe."

"Yes, we buy a good deal at this store, but we do not expect too much of Mr. Packard on that account. Well, if you really think it would not be too much trouble I would take it as a great favor if you would get me a dozen buttons as near like this sample as possible."

"I will get them if they are to be had in Glendale," said Frank, taking the sample and putting it in his pocket.

Miss Montgomery made several more purchases, after which she bade Frank good-by in a very friendly way and returned to her sleigh.

Frank made entries in Mr. Packard's salesbook of what the young lady had taken away with her, and then he told the storekeeper about the commission he had undertaken to execute in Glendale for the banker's daughter.

"That was the right thing for you to do," said Mr. Packard, approvingly. "The Montgomerys are very nice people. They are very considerate in their dealings with others—I wish I could say the same of, well, the Leaches, for example—and I am always glad to do them a favor, for they appreciate it. Now, Frank, take these cans out of this box and place them on the shelf of the grocery department. You will find a few cans left of the same kind. Place them in front of these so they will go out first."

"All right, sir."

Frank had just finished the job when a healthy-looking boy of his own age came into the store.

"I want five pounds of these nails, Mr. Packard," he said.

"Frank, attend to Joe Norris. I'll charge the order. You will find the nail kegs in front of the counter yonder."

"New clerk, eh?" said Norris, as Frank took the sample from his hand.

"Yes."

"When did you come here?"

"Last night."
 "You're a stranger in these parts. Relative of Packard?"
 "No."
 "How came you to get the job?"
 "Walked in here last evening and he hired me."
 "Say, I rather like you. What's your name?"
 "Friendless Frank."
 "Mine is Joe Norris. But yours is a queer name."
 "So I heard Mr. Packard call you. Glad to know you. As for my nickname, it's one I was dubbed in the past. However, I like your face, and hope I will make a friend of you."
 "Same here. We'll be good friends, I guess."
 "I hope so."
 "Shake over it," said Joe, holding out his hand. Frank shook hands with him.
 "My father is a carpenter and builder, and I help him," explained Norris. "We live in a small cottage not such a great way from here. I want you to come over and see me. I'll take you around and introduce you to the boys."
 "Thanks," replied Frank. "I have no desire to remain friendless any longer."
 "You're welcome. I hope you'll stay in the village some time."
 "I may."
 "Where do you hail from?"
 "Rockdale Center."
 "Your folks live there, eh?"
 "No," replied Frank, shaking his head. "I have no folks."
 "That so? All alone in the world?"
 "Yes."
 "That's too bad. Well, we'll make you feel at home here. There are some first-rate boys in the village—and girls, too," added Joe, with a grin.
 "I saw quite a bunch in a sled last evening—one of the young ladies was in here a short time ago. She told me her name was Flora Montgomery. I think she's a fine girl."
 "I should say she is! She's the king-pin in this place. Her father is president of the bank. They're considered the richest family in town. You mustn't expect to associate with her, but she'll treat you all right when she comes in here to buy anything."
 "The boy who drove the sled was in here about an hour ago. His name is Herbert Leach."
 "Oh, he's the swellest thing in the village—in his own estimation. I hope you took your hat off to him. If you didn't he'll be down on you like a thousand of brick, and will try to get you out of Shadowbrook."
 "Why, does he run the village?"
 "No; but his father tries to do it. Squire Leach is the only lawyer in the place, and a justice besides. He's got a pull with some of the county politicians. He's the head selectman of the village, and puts on a whole lot of style. You can't touch him with a forty-foot pole. He's a trustee and deacon of the Brick Church, and what he says goes. If he took a grouch to the minister he'd go, too."
 "I don't like Herbert Leach so far as I've seen him," said Frank. "I had something of a run-in with him when he was here. He asked me an impertinent question which I refused to answer, because I thought it was none of his business, and when he insisted on a reply I told him so."
 "You told him that it was none of his business?" almost gasped Joe Norris. "Did you use those words?"
 "I did."
 "Suffering Isaac! What did he say? He must have been mad."
 "He was. He wanted Mr. Packard to discharge me for insulting him. The matter blew over, however."
 "I guess you're a boy who won't stand any nonsense," said Joe, admiringly. "I like you twice as well for that. Herbert Leach needs a good calling down, but I don't know any fellow who's got the nerve to do it."
 "It wouldn't take me long to do it if he stepped on my toes," said Frank, resolutely.
 "Say, you're all right! The boys will take to you like a duck to water. And I reckon you'll stand well with the girls, too, as soon as they come to know you."
 "Well, here's your nails, Norris. I'll be glad to call on you when I find out where your house is. Perhaps you'd better call and take me over. It will take me a little time to find out where everybody lives."
 "I'll come around after you to-morrow night. Packard will let you off, I guess. So long," and Joe marched out of the store.

CHAPTER IV.

FRANK SHOWS THE STUFF HE'S MADE OF.

"I'm goin' to leave the store in your charge to-night, Frank," said Mr. Packard, at the supper table that evening. "Me and Miss Packard is goin' to make a call about three miles out of the village, and I'm thinkin' we won't be back much before eleven. I close up always at ten. My customers understand that—I mean those who spend their evenin's here—so, when the clock strikes you'll find that the last of them will begin to move off. Lock up then, and wait for us in the kitchen. You'll find papers and a few books in the sittin' room to amuse you."

Mr. Packard then showed the boy his "slate," a small blankbook in which he was to charge up the cider and cigars ordered by those whose names appeared in it.

All others were expected to settle in cash.

About seven the regulars began to drop in, one by one, and Frank filled their orders as they gave them.

There was only one customer after that hour for something out of the store. That was an auburn-haired girl who brought a jug for a quart of molasses.

She regarded Frank with a considerable show of interest, for good-looking, gentlemanly boys of his stamp were not numerous in Shadowbrook.

When he handed her the filled jug and took the money she seemed about to say something, then blushed and was about to retire when Frank said:

"Anything else, miss?"

"No; nothing else. Are you clerking steady for Mr. Packard?"

"Yes. I expect to remain here for a while. Are you one of our regular customers?"

"We buy most everything we need here," smiled the girl, a bit coquettishly.

"Perhaps you don't mind telling me your name."

"Hattie Smith."

"Thank you. My name is Frank Fairfax. Do you know a boy named Joe Norris?"

"Oh, yes. He lives in the next cottage to ours."

"Nice chap, don't you think? He says he's going to introduce me around."

"He isn't as good-looking or as polite as you," smiled the girl, archly.

"Thank you for the compliment, Miss Smith," laughed Frank. "I'm looking for a nice girl to call on and take around after I get acquainted. Could you recommend me to any of your acquaintances? Or perhaps you might not object to filling the bill yourself."

"I should be glad to have you call and see me," blushed the girl, delighted at Frank's proposition, which he had really only uttered in jest.

"Then I will, as soon as I get acquainted with the village. I don't know anybody yet except Joe Norris—and Miss Montgomery," he added.

"Do you know her?" exclaimed the girl, in surprise.

"Merely as one of our customers. I hardly think I shall have the honor of visiting her in a social way."

"Well, I must be going," said Miss Smith. "Good-night."

"Good-night. Glad to have met you," said Frank, with a bow.

Hattie smiled her sweetest and hurried home to tell her mother that Mr. Packard had a new clerk who was just the handsomest and nicest boy she had ever met, and that he had promised to call on her soon.

Then she began to build a few air-castles around Frank, and determined to do her best to secure him for herself and make all the other girls jealous of her conquest.

Frank hung around near the stove listening to the conversation of the select coterie who made the store their stamping ground evenings.

One of them asked him his name, where he came from, and sundry other questions, and the rest took in the boy's answers.

Frank soon knew them all by name, and before nine o'clock was on friendly terms with each and every one.

Just as the clock struck nine the door opened and admitted three rough-looking men.

One of them carried a grip.

As they slouched toward the stove and the light struck on their faces Frank gave a gasp, for he recognized them as the three ruffians who had held him up near Rockdale Center and robbed him of his grip.

The bag which one of them carried was not his, however.

"Kin we have somethin' to eat and drink here?" asked one of them, who appeared to be the leader.

"You'll find a small restaurant up the street," replied Frank, wondering whether they recognized him or not.

"We seen the place, but it's closed. Yer kin sell us some crackers and cheese, and some smoked beef, can't yer?"

"Yes, I can do that."

"Then trot 'em out and name the damage. What kin yer give us to drink?"

"Cider."

"Cider be——" then the speaker checked himself. "Well, give us the cider."

Frank brought a liberal quantity of the articles they had mentioned, and finally three mugs of cider.

They selected three boxes and sat down.

Frank eyed them askance and observed that they ate like very hungry men.

The habitues of the store also eyed them, evidently with some distrust.

And there was reason for it, as they did not look like honest men.

Frank wished that Mr. Packard was around so he could tell him who the men were.

It would probably be useless to try and have the rascals arrested on the charge of robbing him in the neighborhood of Rockdale Center, seventy miles away, as it would be difficult, if not impossible, for him to bring the crime home to them now.

He couldn't identify any money they might have about them as his property, and they had, without doubt, abandoned his grip after going through it and taking out the bills.

He wondered what brought them to Shadowbrook, or whether they were merely tramping through it.

They conversed together in tones too low to be overheard by any one but themselves, and the boy noticed, with some anxiety, that they frequently looked around the store as if sizing the place up.

"I wish they'd go," he said to himself, but they seemed to be in no hurry.

They called for a fresh supply of crackers and smoked beef, and more cider, and Frank furnished it to them.

The chief ruffian paid the charge without any question, and they lingered while they ate and drank as if in no hurry to get through.

At half-past nine one of the village constables came in for a mug of cider, and he regarded the ruffianly strangers with some suspicion.

He also looked hard at Frank, for he saw he was a stranger in the village, too.

"Where's Packard?" asked the constable, addressing the group around the stove in a general way.

"He and Miss Packard have gone visitin' to-night," volunteered one of the customers, who had obtained the information from Frank.

"Gone visitin', eh?" laughed the constable. "Hello, youngster," he added, looking at Frank, "are you Packard's new clerk?"

The boy said he was.

"Where did you spring from?" the constable continued.

"New York," replied Frank, not caring to mention the name of Rockdale Center within hearing of the three rascals.

"I thought you said you came from Rockdale Center?" said the man who had informed the constable that the store-keeper and his wife had gone visiting.

He spoke in a loud voice, and the boy saw the rascals prick up their ears and glance over at him.

"That was the last place I stopped at before I came on here," replied Frank.

"Going to remain here?" asked the constable.

"I expect to, for a while."

"What's your name?"

Frank told him.

"You look like a smart boy, and that's the kind Packard has been after. I guess you'll be a fixture as long as you want to stay."

Then he went on talking with the others.

When he took his leave Frank followed him out on the veranda, and told him the character of the three strangers.

"I'll drop in and see the head constable," said the deputy. "Perhaps he may think it advisable to arrest them as suspicious characters."

With those words he went off.

Ten o'clock came and the regular loungers rose with one accord and started for the door.

Before they got outside Frank approached the three rascals and told them they'd have to go, as he was going to lock up.

They looked at him, then at each other.

"We'll go in a minute, as soon as we warm up a bit at the stove," said the leader.

Frank believed they were playing for time.

They could not help knowing that he was alone in the place, for they had listened to what had been said in the presence of the constable, and he felt nervous.

Mr. Packard and his wife would not return for an hour, according to their programme, and that would give these scoundrels a chance to do him up and clean out the house if that was their purpose, and he was afraid it was.

The neighborhood was quite deserted by this time, and everything favored the villainous trio.

Several plans for outwitting the rascals flashed through the boy's mind, but none of them seemed to offer any great prospect of success.

Suddenly he remembered that he had seen a revolver in a drawer of the sitting room.

He determined to get it for his own protection and that of the house.

The men were talking together in low tones around the fire, and while they were thus engaged Frank slipped into the sitting room, found the revolver and put it in his pocket.

Then he braced himself for the crisis that he looked for.

Walking into the store, he said:

"Well, are you going?"

The men stopped talking and the leader said:

"Get us another round of cider and we'll leave."

"No; I can't let you have anything more to-night."

"All right, my pippin, then we'll have to help ourselves to what we kin find, and if yer open yer trap to call for help, or move from that spot, I'll blow the hull top off yer head," said the leader, putting his hand to his hip pocket.

"I don't think you will," replied Frank, coolly. "You'll all throw up your hands or I'll make a target of each of you."

With those words he flashed out Mr. Packard's revolver and covered them with the muzzle.

CHAPTER V.

FRANK ACHIEVES POPULARITY.

The three rascals were taken completely by surprise.

The leader uttered an imprecation and half drew the revolver he had in his hip pocket.

"Take your hand away from your gun," said Frank, in a stern tone. "If you don't I shall shoot you in-self-defense."

The fellow obeyed, reluctantly enough.

"Now, then, sit down on those boxes again, where I can keep my eye on you," said Frank.

They obeyed with very bad grace.

"We'll get out of your store," said the leader, in a surly tone.

"No, you won't. You'll stay where you are till Mr. Packard gets back. You intended to rob this store and house."

"We were only tryin' to frighten yer," growled the chief ruffian.

"That won't go down with me. I know the three of you. You held me up on the county road near Rockdale Center a week ago and cleaned me out."

"You're a liar!" snarled the man.

"All right. Have it your way. But I guess you're up against it now."

"You can't prove nothin' agin us."

"If I can't you'll get off, so you needn't worry, then."

"We'll get square with you for this, young man," said the rascal, with a menacing shake of the head.

"I'm not afraid of anything you'll do. The chances are you'll go to jail for attempting to loot this place. At any rate, you'll have to give an account of yourselves, and I doubt if you can make anybody believe that you're even half way honest."

"You'd better let us go, if you know when you're well off."

"Mr. Packard can let you go if he wants to, I won't."

"You'll regret it."

"I can't help that. I know what my duty is and I propose to live up to it. You caught me once off my guard, and I paid for it. I didn't propose to be trapped twice if

I could help myself. I knew you chaps the moment you came into the store. If you'd gone away without making trouble I shouldn't have bothered with you. You made the mistake of thinking that because there were three of you against one, and that one a boy, you had everything your own way. You see that you slipped up."

The rascals glared at him, but their fierce looks had no effect on Frank.

They moved restlessly about on their seats on the boxes and he stood where he could easily observe the slightest attempt on their part to turn the scales.

His resolute manner, backed by the heavy revolver, deterred them from taking any chances, and so the minutes slipped by and eleven o'clock approached.

Presently Frank heard the sound of sleigh bells jingling along the side of the building and then come to a stop.

He knew that the storekeeper and his wife had returned, and it was a great relief to him.

Then came a pounding on the kitchen door, which was locked and bolted.

Of course the boy couldn't answer the summons under the circumstances.

The knocking was repeated and kept up for a full minute.

"They think I'm asleep. If they would only come around to the store door they could get in, but no doubt they think that is locked and barred long before this. I can't take my eyes off these rascals, so Mr. Packard will have to investigate on his own hook," said Frank, as the knocking was resumed.

After a lapse of five minutes, during which the storekeeper had gotten a box and looked in at the sitting-room window, he came around in front and tried the door.

It yielded to his touch and he walked in.

Naturally he was surprised and startled to see three hard-looking men seated on boxes close together not far from the stove and his new clerk standing guard over them with a revolver.

"Why, Frank, what's the trouble?" he asked, as he advanced into the store.

"These chaps came in here looking for something to eat, and I sold them a meal of crackers, cheese, smoked beef and cider. They hung around until your evening customers all went away. Then they showed that their intention was to rob the place. I got your revolver and stood them off, as you see. You'd better go and get the constable to take charge of them," explained Frank.

"My gracious!" ejaculated the storekeeper, rather astounded by the condition of affairs.

He looked the rascals over, and easily believed they were a hard trio.

"So they were going to rob the store, were they?" he added. "I'll have them attended to right off. Do you think you can hold them a while longer?"

"I'll hold them, all right," replied Frank. "Hustle after the constable."

"I'll go right around to his house in my sleigh and fetch him back with me."

He passed through his living apartments and opened the kitchen door, where he explained the state of things to his wife, who was much startled.

He was going to take her with him, but she was a resolute little woman and said she'd stay and help Frank.

She got the heavy stove poker and entered the store, while Mr. Packard drove off in a hurry.

The head rascal now tried to compromise the matter, swearing that he and his pals meant no harm, and that the boy was mistaken in supposing they intended to rob the house.

Frank knew the rascals he was dealing with, and he wouldn't listen to them, so matters remained as they were till Mr. Packard returned with the head constable and one of his deputies.

Frank then told his story, and he also asserted these were the men who had waylaid and robbed him near Rockdale Center.

The rascals made an emphatic denial to both of his statements.

"It is a case for the justice to pass upon," said the constable, "so I'll have to take you men along with me."

They were handcuffed together, put in the sleigh and driven off to the building that did duty as a jail, where they were locked up.

Mr. Packard then returned to the store.

He complimented Frank on his pluck and alertness, and

assured him he would not forget what he owed him for saving his place from being looted.

"That's all right, sir," replied Frank. "I didn't do any more than my duty. You left the premises in my charge, and I did the best I could to defend them."

"No one could have done better—not even the constable. It showed great courage on your part to hold those three rascals up, and each of them armed at that. I don't see how you managed it."

"Well, I took them by surprise and got the drop on them. Then I let them know that I would shoot if they made a hostile move. They saw I meant business, and were afraid to take any chances. That's the whole story in a nutshell."

"Well, it's after twelve now, so we'll go to bed. To-morrow you'll be the hero of the village as soon as the account of this affair gets around. You won't need any better introduction to the inhabitants."

At ten o'clock next morning the three rascals were brought up before Justice Leach in his office.

A big crowd of curious villagers gathered on the outside of the building, for the news of the attempted robbery of Mr. Packard's store had spread very quickly, as such things always circulate from mouth to mouth in rural localities, but only a few spectators could get into the room.

Frank told his story under oath, and his manner impressed all in the room with its truthfulness.

The deputy constable who had dropped in at the store the night before, and several of Mr. Packard's nightly habitués, testified to the presence of the three men in the store, but, of course, they had nothing to say against them.

The rascals, when asked what they had to say in their own behalf made an unqualified denial of the charge.

While Frank's evidence was uncorroborated, Justice Leach decided that, as the fellows looked like suspicious characters, and could not give a satisfactory account of themselves, he would hold them pending an investigation of their antecedents, so they were sent back to jail and the constable instructed to look their records up.

Frank attracted a lot of attention when he came out of the justice's office.

The editor of the Shadowbrook "Times" shook hands with him and said he was proud to know such a plucky lad.

In fact, he was the most talked of person in the village that day, and a considerable number of the inhabitants dropped into the store that afternoon to see and talk to him.

Joe Norris was one of these, and he was mighty proud of having made Frank's acquaintance the day before.

"You're a nervy boy, all right," said Joe, admiringly. "I kind of sized you up as such yesterday. You'll be the most popular chap in the village with the boys, see if you aren't. The fellows appreciate real grit, and they are bound to admire a chap who has it. I'm going to introduce you to some of them to-night. I'm afraid no fellow's girl will be safe while you're around. They'll all be after you."

"Girls don't worry me much," replied Frank, laughingly. "At any rate, I wouldn't think of butting in between any fellow and his best girl. I don't believe in that kind of business. It isn't a square deal."

"Good for you! There are a whole lot of girls the boys haven't any claims on, and most of them are pretty. You'll have plenty to pick from."

"Well, drop the girl question. I have something more serious to think about these days. Come around about half-past seven and I'll go with you."

That matter being settled, Joe went away.

CHAPTER VI.

HERBERT LEACH TRIES TO IMPRESS FRANK WITH AN IDEA OF HIS IMPORTANCE.

Frank was introduced to a crowd of the village boys that evening and they all decided that he was a first-class fellow.

Joe had told them the way he had handled Herbert Leach at the store, and as Leach was decidedly unpopular with the boys they all applauded Frank's conduct.

Of course the way he had held up the three ruffians and saved the store from being looted made Frank a kind of hero with his new friends, and every one showed him all the attention he could.

Next morning, when Frank rode to Glendale for the mail, he went around among the dry and fancy goods stores and finally succeeded in matching the pearl buttons that Flora Montgomery wanted.

He delivered them to her when making his round of the

village later on, and she thanked him for taking so much trouble on her account.

He assured her that it was no trouble at all, and that he was very glad to be of service to her.

Frank had a large order to deliver at Squire Leach's house that day.

When he drove his sleigh into the yard Herbert was at the barn, having just come home from a horseback ride with one of his cronies.

He walked up to the side of the sleigh where Frank was lifting a box of groceries out to take into the kitchen.

"So you came from Rockdale Center, did you?" he said, curiously.

He had heard Frank testify to that fact in his father's office the morning before at the examination of the three rascals.

"I did," replied the young store clerk.

"Work in a store there?"

"No. Worked on a farm."

"You're a farmer's boy, then?"

"Hardly. I only worked ten months on Mr. Parker's farm. That was all the farming I ever did."

"What did you do before that?" asked Herbert, who seemed determined to find out all he could about this young stranger to the village who had so distinguished himself immediately after his advent in the place.

"I went to school."

"In Rockdale Center?"

"No. In New York City."

"Were you born in New York?"

"I was."

Herbert was evidently surprised to find that Frank was a New York boy.

"Are your folks living in New York?"

"No. My father and mother are dead."

"How came you to go to Rockdale Center? I should think you'd have preferred to stay in New York."

"I went there because my mother moved there."

"What made you come here?"

"Because it was on my way to Buffalo."

"Are you going to Buffalo?"

"I think it is likely I may go there after a while."

"How did you happen to get the job at the store?"

"Mr. Packard wanted a clerk and offered me the situation. I accepted it."

"Then you expect to stay here some time, do you?"

"I cannot say how long I'll stay here. It will depend on circumstances."

"I wouldn't like to be a poor boy like you. You'll have to work all your life."

"Maybe not."

"Why, have you got any rich relative whom you expect will leave you something?" said Herbert, regarding him with a new interest.

"No."

"Then why won't you have to work for a living all your life? If you don't you will have to go to the poorhouse. I suppose you'll go anyway when you get too old to work any more."

"I hope I shan't go to the poorhouse. I hope to make enough to keep me when I'm old, if I live that long."

"Do you expect to own a country store some day?"

"No; I expect to do better than that."

"Oh, you do?" sneered Herbert. "How?"

"That is a question I haven't decided yet. I'm young and have lots of time to consider just what I'll do."

"You'll never be able to make much money," said Herbert, with the air of one who thought he knew it all. "It takes influence to get ahead. My father has influence, so I expect to get ahead. Besides, he's rich, and when he dies I'll get all his money. I'm going to college, and after that I intend to study law, and be a lawyer and justice like my father. I shall live in this house, or a better one, and probably I'll go into politics, and be sent to the Legislature."

Herbert spoke pompously, as was his fashion, and his object was to impress the young stranger to the village with a proper idea of his importance, so that in the future Frank would take his hat off to him, as it were.

If he had known what little effect his words had on his listener he would not have felt well pleased.

"I congratulate you on your prospects," said Frank, with a half smile. "I hope they may all come out the way you expect."

"Why shouldn't they?"

"I don't know any reason why they shouldn't."

"I should think not. Don't you wish your chances were as good as mine?"

"I suppose it would be to my advantage if they were," replied Frank.

"Of course it would. But probably you don't understand these things, as you've been brought up a poor boy, without expectations."

"Some of our richest and most successful men started out as poor boys."

"They were extra smart, and luck favored them."

"I think they made their own luck."

"Maybe you think you'll be like them. I'm afraid you'll be disappointed if you do."

"I mean to make the most of my opportunities. I can't do any more than that. Well, you'll have to excuse me. I have quite a number of houses to visit after I leave here."

Frank shouldered the box of groceries and carried it into the house, while Herbert returned to the barn to see if the man was attending to his horse properly.

The store boy took a second box into the kitchen and then drove out of the yard and up the shady, snow-covered street.

He was rather amused with Herbert Leach's conversation, and the questions he had put to him.

He hoped the lawyer's son was satisfied now that he knew where he had come from and how he had got his position at the store.

"He'll sleep better to-night, I hope," chuckled Frank. "I don't think I envy him much. It isn't always the rich men's sons who reach the top of the ladder. I don't believe he'll make much of a stir in the world. He isn't built that way. I'd feel sorry for him if his father suddenly lost all his money. I dare say he thinks such a calamity as that out of the question, but such things have happened before, and are liable to happen again. Riches are all right in their way, but pluck, perseverance and energy, backed up by ambition to reach a desired goal, are better. I hope I have my share of these blessings. If I have I'll run my chance of becoming rich some day, or at least well enough off to make life worth living."

Frank managed to find his way around to all the customers that morning, although he had some trouble doing it, and had to make many inquiries along the route.

Finally he returned to the store with many orders, put up the horse and went into the store to get them ready for delivery next day, and to wait on customers.

By the end of the week he had the village down pretty fine, and experienced no further trouble in making his deliveries.

He had made himself a great favorite with the store-keeper and his wife, who congratulated themselves on getting such a smart young assistant.

"He's worth a dozen of the other boys I've had," Mr. Packard said to his wife. "I hope I'll be able to keep him. I have my doubts, though, as boys like him are too ambitious to settle down to clerking in a village store."

The three rascals, who had been held four days in the lock-up, were transferred that afternoon to Glendale, the county seat, for trial, the constable having found out that they were known to the New York police, and had served time at Sing Sing.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW FRANK GOES TO THE AID OF FLORA MONTGOMERY.

Next day was Sunday, and, of course, the store was closed.

There were two churches in Shadowbrook, the one known as the Brick Church, situated in the center of the village, being the more important.

The better class of people in the place had pews in the Brick Church, notably Banker Montgomery, Lawyer Leach, and other well-to-do residents.

Mr. Packard also had a pew there, not that he was particularly religious, but because it was to his interest to make a showing.

He made it a point to be present at morning services every Sunday, with his wife, and he believed it to be his duty, now that Frank was living with him, to take him, too.

They were already in their pew when the Montgomerys entered the edifice that morning, and Flora, observing Frank as she walked up the aisle with her parents, bowed to him with a friendly and winsome smile.

The Leaches came in directly afterward, but though Herbert saw the young clerk, he did not consider that his dignity would permit him to notice a poor boy.

Joe Norris and his folks also attended the same church, and when the morning service was over he was on the lookout for Frank.

He introduced him to his parents, and to his sister, and invited him to go home with them to dinner.

Frank accepted the invitation and went with them.

"You're going to Sunday school with us, aren't you?" said Joe, after dinner. "You'll meet all the fellows and girls there, and it won't take you long to get acquainted."

Frank agreed to go and they set off about half-past one.

They overtook Hattie Smith on the way, and she bowed and smiled her prettiest at the new store clerk.

When the four young people reached the church, Herbert Leach was talking to Flora Montgomery and another stylishly-dressed girl on the porch.

To his surprise and displeasure Flora held out her daintily-gloved hand to Frank and greeted him in the friendliest way.

Frank raised his hat and bowed, while Herbert looked the other way for fear the store boy might claim his acquaintance on the strength of the conversation they had had in his yard.

"Clara," said Flora, turning to her friend, "this is Frank Fairfax. He's the boy who captured the three men who tried to rob Mr. Packard's store. Mr. Fairfax, Miss Bloodgood."

The girl smiled and offered him her hand.

"Herbert," continued Flora, "let me make you acquainted with Frank Fairfax."

"Oh, we have met before," said Herbert, stiffly.

After a few words Frank rejoined his friends.

"Say, if you're going to get in with that swell set, we'll have to take a back seat," said Joe.

"Don't worry, Norris. I'm not going to shake you and the other fellows for anybody. I'm not looking for stylish friends. Miss Montgomery noticed me of her own accord, you saw that, and I couldn't refuse an introduction to her friend."

"Of course you couldn't; but, I say, it was rough on Herbert Leach. He's dead stuck on Flora Montgomery, and it broke his heart to see her notice a common clerk like you," and Joe laughed fit to split. "Then she rubbed it in by introducing you to him. Did you notice his face? He looked as if he'd been sucking a sour lemon. Flora Montgomery seems to have taken a shine to you. She's a fine girl, but is not in the habit of being friendly with boys or girls out of her own set."

Joe and his sister introduced Frank to all their friends, and the girls particularly seemed to be quite attracted to the newcomer in the village.

Hattie Smith got quite jealous over the attentions of the other girls to him, for she had determined in her own mind to win him for herself.

She soon found out that her work was cut out for her, for more than half the girls entertained the same feelings toward Frank that she did herself.

On the following Thursday afternoon Mr. Packard told Frank to hitch up the sleigh and take an order out to a certain house on the outskirts of the village.

To reach his destination Frank had to cross a short bridge that spanned the little river that ran near Shadowbrook.

The stream was coated with ice, in most parts sufficiently thick to bear skaters, and the village lads and lassies made the wide space above the bridge their skating ground.

When Frank drove his rig across the bridge he saw quite a number of the well-to-do boys and girls gliding around and cutting figures on the dull surface, which had been swept clean of the recent snow for their especial benefit.

After he had delivered his goods he let his sleigh stand and walked over to a point a little way above the bridge to get a nearer view of the skaters.

At that moment four girls started a race among themselves, the objective point of which was the bridge.

One girl, whom Frank recognized as Flora Montgomery, soon took the lead, and gradually distanced her companions.

She was a splendid skater and spun along at high speed.

All at once Frank noticed that she was headed in the direction of a danger sign where the ice was too thin to be crossed with safety.

He shouted to her a warning, but as she was hugging the opposite shore, and was, moreover, greatly excited over the prospect of beating her friends, she did not hear nor notice him.

Fearful that she might fail to notice the danger sign in time to turn aside, he ran to the bridge, crossed it, and dashed down the bank through the snow to the edge of the ice, intending to head her off.

Unfortunately for Flora, she covered the ice at so rapid a

pace that she outdistanced the boy, and she saw the sign "Danger" too late to save herself.

She made an effort to swing around, but, turning too sharp, lost her balance and fell heavily on the weak ice.

In an instant the surface all around her cracked and broke up, and she was precipitated into the chilly water.

With a shrill scream on her lips she disappeared from sight, to the consternation of the other three girls, who also screamed and rushed forward to try and rescue her.

It was at that thrilling moment Frank reached the edge of the ice.

He rushed out on the slippery surface, fully determined to save Flora at any cost.

The creaking and sagging of the ice soon told him that he could not approach the hole where the girl had just gone down into without catching an involuntary bath himself.

He tried to work around the edge and draw near from another point, but all were equally insecure.

He saw that he could not reach Flora from any quarter except by plunging into the rapidly-widening hole himself.

As he looked he saw her coming to the surface.

She reached out and frantically grabbed at the ice around her, but it melted in bits under her fingers.

"It's up to me to save her," said Frank, "and there's only one way to do it."

Taking a long breath he sprang into the water, and went down near Flora just as she sank the second time.

The water chilled him to the bone, but he cared not for that.

He pushed out in the direction she had disappeared and his hands encountered the almost insensible girl.

Grasping her firmly as his feet touched the bottom he propelled himself upward.

As Frank came to the surface with the unconscious girl in his arms, a succession of shrill screams struck upon his ears.

Flora's companions, in their anxiety for her safety, had ventured too far on the treacherous ice and had broken through.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRANK TELLS HERBERT LEACH WHAT HE THINKS OF HIM.

The other girls, however, had fortunately gone down in a shallower spot closer to the shore, and their heads did not go under.

Their fright was great and their screams echoed far and near, attracting the attention of two men at the house where Frank had left his goods, as well as the notice of the other skaters, who, in great alarm, came trooping toward the spot.

Frank had his hands full trying to save Flora, so it was very fortunate indeed that her companions had broken through in a comparatively shallow place.

The boy struck out with one arm, carrying his precious burden on the other, and, being a fine swimmer, he reached the spot where the other girls were floundering about, where his feet touched bottom.

"Stop screaming," said Frank. "You're in no danger of drowning. Turn around and wade shoreward."

His coolness and energetic manner had the desired effect and encouraged by his words they waded up on the bank and got off their skates, while he followed with the senseless Flora.

At that moment Herbert Leach glided up close to the shore.

"Here, let me take Miss Montgomery," he said authoritatively, reaching out his arms.

Frank brushed him aside, stepped on the sloping bank, and dashing up through the snow, ran as fast as he could toward the bridge, at the same time calling on the other dripping girls to follow him.

His object was to get Flora and the others to the near-by house, where he knew they would be attended to properly by the women of the place.

The rush of the sharp afternoon air in Flora's face revived her as he was carrying her across the bridge.

Her head lay across the upper part of his left arm, and when she opened her eyes they rested wonderingly on his face.

She recognized his features, and asked herself, in a dazed kind of way, why he was carrying her, and what had happened to her.

Before they had quite reached the house the whole thing flashed across her mind—the breaking of the ice around her,

as she tried to avoid the danger spot; the fall and immersion in the chill water, and the brief sensation of some one grasping her about the waist as she was sinking for the second time.

She saw the water dripping from Frank's hair, and hanging in frozen bulbs from his eyelashes, and she knew that it was he who had saved her life.

As Frank passed the bridge he looked behind to see if the three water-soaked girls were following, and found that they were trudging after him through the snow as fast as they could.

The women of the house were standing at the kitchen door watching their approach.

"Here," said Frank, as he placed Flora on her feet, "take charge of Miss Montgomery and do what you can for her. She was pretty nearly drowned, but I see she's come to. There are three more girls who need attention, too, right behind. You can't get their clothes off them any too quick. If Mr. Brown is around you'd better tell him to take my sleigh and go for the nearest doctor. His services may be necessary."

The women understood the situation and got busy at once.

One of them rushed Flora up to her room, the others took charge of her three friends as Frank assisted them into the kitchen.

"My husband is in the barn," said Mrs. Brown. "Go there and ask him to give you some dry clothes to put on yourself, or you'll catch your death. Then you can tell him to go for the doctor."

"Hello!" exclaimed Brown, eyeing Frank's bedraggled appearance as he walked into the barn. "Broke through the ice, eh?"

"No. I jumped in after Miss Montgomery, who broke through at the danger spot. Mrs. Brown said you'd let me have some clothes to take the place of these wet ones."

"Come up in the loft to my hired man's room and I'll fix you up," said Brown, leading the way. "So Miss Montgomery went through the ice, did she? I thought that sign there was plain enough for any one to see."

"She was racing with three other girls, and in her excitement she didn't notice the sign until too late to save herself?"

"Too bad! You brought her to the house, did you?" said Brown.

"Yes. You'd better take my sleigh and go for a doctor as soon as you get me the clothes."

"I'll do it. Peel off now and I'll give you a rubbing down."

In a few minutes Frank's skin was all in a glow and the shivering sensation had passed off.

Then he got into the clothes that Mr. Brown produced and he felt all right.

"Bury yourself in that pile of hay till I come back," said the boss of the farm.

He wrung out Frank's clothes and took them in to the kitchen of his house and hung them up to dry near the stove.

The boys who had been skating with the girls were hanging around outside, and Herbert Leach seemed very anxious to learn how Flora was getting on, while George Bloodgood was even more solicitous about his sister.

Brown, as he got into Mr. Packard's sleigh, told them that he hadn't seen the girls, but assured them that they were getting all necessary attention from his wife and daughters.

Herbert wondered where Frank Fairfax had taken himself to.

He was greatly vexed that the store boy had been on hand to save Flora, forgetting that if he had not been there at the critical moment the girl would undoubtedly have been drowned.

Herbert realized that Frank's prompt action in Flora's behalf would raise him greatly in the girl's esteem, and cement a friendship between them that he was most decidedly opposed to.

It would also bring the young clerk to the favorable notice of the banker and his wife, and Mr. Montgomery might give him as much as a thousand dollars for saving his daughter.

He felt that a thousand dollars would make Fairfax mighty independent, and as he himself had never enjoyed the unrestricted possession of a tenth part of such a sum, he viewed the rising importance of the store boy with all the jealousy of his narrow nature.

Such a thing as Frank refusing to accept money for saving Flora's life if it was offered him did not for a moment occur to Herbert.

As well fixed as he considered himself he would eagerly have accepted even a hundred dollars for a similar service.

He was mad, too, that Frank had refused to deliver the partly unconscious girl into his hands after taking her from the water.

To be pushed aside as if he were a common boy, instead of the most important one in Shadowbrook, angered him more than a little.

He determined to get square on this young interloper, as he now looked upon Fairfax, and the most effective way of doing this was by trying to induce his mother, whom he felt would take his part, to withdraw her custom from Mr. Packard's store while the new clerk remained there.

Herbert commenced to run down Frank to his companions as they stood in Brown's yard, but was disgusted to find that they wouldn't fall in with his opinions.

"What's the matter with you, Herbert?" said George Bloodgood, brother of Flora's most intimate companion, Clara, and the son of the cashier of the Shadowbrook Bank. "Frank Fairfax is all right, in my opinion. I don't see how you can say anything against him when you know he saved Flora Montgomery's life just now."

"Pooh!" sneered Leach. "She wouldn't have drowned. We'd have saved her. Your sister, May French and Edith Brooks fell in, too, didn't they? and the water wasn't over their heads. They helped themselves out. I'll bet Flora could have done the same if she hadn't been so frightened."

"You're clean wrong, Herbert. Flora fell in at a deep spot, three yards further out than where my sister and the other girls broke through. She'd have been drowned if it had not been that Fairfax plunged in and brought her to the surface."

"I don't see what you want to stand up for that fellow for," retorted Herbert, in very bad humor.

"I'm not standing up for him any more than he deserves. That was a plucky act, to jump right in that freezing water. You wouldn't have done it for a million dollars, I'll bet, if you'd been on the spot where Flora broke through," replied Bloodgood, who was an independent lad and had no great respect for Herbert, whom he had long since sized up at his true valuation.

"You make me sick, George Bloodgood; I don't believe you'd have jumped in yourself, even to save your sister."

"You are welcome to your opinion, but it doesn't count for much in my estimation," replied Bloodgood, angry at Herbert's mean reflection on his courage with reference to his sister. "You imagine you're the whole thing in the village, but you're not, by a long way. I'd hate to tell you what I think of you, but if you push me to it I will."

Herbert didn't like his companion's plain talk for a cent, for it made him feel pretty small; but he couldn't afford to quarrel with George Bloodgood from motives of policy, and for that reason he was accustomed to take things from the cashier's son that he wouldn't stand for from anybody else.

Herbert made no reply to the last speech, and not wishing to hear any more of the same kind he walked off by himself.

Entering the barn he looked around the place, and finally his curiosity induced him to go up in the loft.

There his eyes rested on Frank's head sticking out of a pile of hay.

"Oh, you're there, are you?" sniffed Herbert, regarding him with an unfavorable eye.

"I am," returned Frank, cheerfully. "Have you any objection?"

"I want to know why you shoved me aside on the river bank. Don't you know you have no right to lay hands on me?"

"Do you want me to apologize?" laughed Frank. "I wasn't aware that I treated you very roughly. You got right in my way as I stepped out of the water with Miss Montgomery, and as we were both dripping wet, and it was necessary she should have attention as soon as possible, why I pushed by you. Now you understand the matter."

"Why didn't you hand her over to me when I asked you?"

"Why should I?" asked Frank, in surprise.

"Because I asked you to. I escorted her to the river to skate and she is under my care, do you understand?"

"If she was under your care you ought to have seen that she didn't get into danger. Or when she did get in danger of her life you ought to have been somewhere near to help her out."

"Look here, Frank Fairfax, I don't want any advice from you. Please to recollect who I am. When I ordered you to hand her over to me you should have done it at once. Do you hear?"

"I heard you very plainly," replied Frank, coolly. "Would you have liked to have gotten your nice clothes sopping wet?"

"That's my business," snarled Herbert.

"All right, then let me tell you that as I jumped into the river and pulled Miss Montgomery out I considered it my business to get her to Mr. Brown's house as soon as possible."

"I consider that you are very impertinent to talk to me in that way. I want you to understand that I'm a gentleman's son, while you are only a common boy."

"I'm very sorry if my language offends your sensitive ears," replied Frank, sarcastically. "I suppose I'll have to learn to treat you with more deference."

"You'd better, if you want to stay in the village."

"Have I to look to you for permission to remain in Shadowbrook?"

"If my mother takes her trade away from Mr. Packard's store on your account, and persuades other customers to do the same, I guess you won't remain long in this place," said Herbert, significantly.

"I haven't offended your mother; in fact, I don't know Mrs. Leach except by sight."

"When you offend me you offend her, do you understand? What I say goes with her. If I tell her that you insulted me she'll write to Mr. Packard demanding your discharge. If he doesn't turn you adrift, then Mr. Packard will lose our custom, and the custom of others in our set. He knows on which side his bread is buttered. He is not going to lose business on your account. There are lots of other boys he can get, and he'll find it to his interest to get one."

"I suppose you don't see anything mean about such a proceeding?" said Frank, with a contemptuous ring to his tones.

"You aren't wanted here, anyway."

"I'm sorry. If I thought that was the general feeling in the village I should leave very quickly, but I'm thinking that you're only expressing your private sentiments, and they don't go very far with me."

"I'll see whether they do or not," replied Herbert angrily. "My father helped get the postmastership for Mr. Packard. It won't pay Mr. Packard to offend us. If he tries to hold onto you after my mother requests him to discharge you, there'll be something doing he won't like. The other general storekeeper would like to get the post-office transferred to his store. I guess my father has pull enough in the right quarter to have the change made. I'll fix you, Frank Fairfax, mark my words."

Frank pulled himself out of the hay and walked up to Herbert, who drew back in alarm.

"You're the meanest little pup I've ever met," said the young clerk wrathfully. "You've got everything you want in this world—parents, a good home and the best of prospects, and yet nothing will satisfy you but to try and make the lot of a poor boy who has never done you a real injury as hard as possible. I wouldn't be like you for the wealth of this country. You're almost too mean to live. Now go and work all the influence you can get together to down me. I admit that I am poor and have been friendless, that I have to make my own way ahead in the world, but I'll tell you one thing right here, time will show which of us reaches the top of the ladder first. I will gamble on it that it won't be you. Now get out of this loft, and go quick or I'll throw you out. I've got no use for fellows of your stamp."

Frank made a move towards him.

Herbert turned pale, for he had very little sand, and sneaked down the stairs as quickly as he could.

CHAPTER IX.

FRIENDLESS FRANK MAKES SEVERAL NEW FRIENDS.

Herbert Leach determined to set the ball rolling at once to insure Friendless Frank's expulsion from the village.

If he disliked him before, he fairly hated him now with all the animosity of his contemptible little nature.

He was willing to go to any length to accomplish his purpose.

He knew he had great influence over his mother, and, as he had threatened Frank, he meant to make her the instrument of his revenge.

While he couldn't work his father so easily, he intended to make his mother influence the squire to act as he wished.

Altogether, he figured that he would have no great difficulty in driving the friendless boy from Shadowbrook.

The first thing he did after leaving the loft was to go to the house and ask how Flora was getting on.

He was told that she was in bed and seemed to feel no bad effects from her involuntary bath.

"My husband went for a doctor, but I don't think he is needed now," concluded Mrs. Brown.

"Do you know where George Bloodgood and the rest of the boys went?" he asked.

"They went to get dry clothes for the young ladies to put on."

Herbert was sorry that he had not thought of going to the Montgomery home on that errand himself.

Bloodgood would go there after he had gotten his sister's clothes, and would tell Mrs. Montgomery how Frank Fairfax had saved Flora's life.

The very thought vexed him very much.

However, he knew what he could do.

He told Mrs. Brown to tell Flora that he would return in an hour with a sleigh and fetch her home.

With this purpose in view he tramped back to the village.

He had hardly gone before Mr. Brown drove up with the doctor.

The physician found that the girls were all right and did not require any treatment on his part, so Mr. Brown drove him home again.

By the time he got back Frank's clothes were dry enough for him to put on, and the boy appeared in the kitchen about the time that George Bloodgood and the other two boys returned with garments for the girls.

"I haven't been introduced to you, Fairfax," said Bloodgood, stepping up to Frank, "but I don't think that formality is necessary under the circumstances. My name is George Bloodgood, and I'm glad to make your acquaintance."

"And I'm glad to know you," responded Frank, pleased at the boy's frank and hearty self-introduction, which showed that he was a good fellow.

Bloodgood then introduced his companions.

"Say, you are making a name for yourself fast in Shadowbrook," said the cashier's son, without the least bit of jealousy in his manner. "First you hold up three armed ruffians in Mr. Packard's store at the muzzle of a revolver, and secure their capture, and now you have saved Flora Montgomery's life at some risk to your own. I'm bound to say that you are a plucky chap and I'm proud to know you, even if you're poor and friendless, as Herbert Leach says you are. You can depend on one thing, that you won't be friendless after this. The Montgomerys will be your friends for life, and their friendship is worth having, I can tell you. In fact, I think I can guarantee that you'll have all the friends you want in this place after this."

"I thank you for the generous attitude you take towards me, Bloodgood," replied Frank gratefully. "You're an altogether different boy from Herbert Leach."

"I should hope I am. If it wasn't that he can bank on his parents, who hold a high social position in the village, he wouldn't amount to a hill of beans. Personally, I don't like him, but I put up with him because he's one of us. People take their hats off to him because his folks are well off, and his father has political connections; but, between you and me, he's the most unpopular lad in the village. He doesn't like you for some reason, but you needn't worry. You can get along without having anything to do with him."

"I'm afraid he intends to make a good deal of trouble for me, or at least for Mr. Packard, in an effort to get at me."

"What makes you think so?"

Frank told the three boys of the threat Herbert made to him in the loft a short time before.

"That's just like him," said Bloodgood. "He's mean enough to do anything in that line. Don't worry, though. If it comes to a pinch, Mr. Montgomery will see that you get a square deal. You needn't fear that Mr. Packard will go back on you if you suit him, because Mrs. Leach should threaten to withdraw her custom from his store. I know he isn't that kind of a man, and I doubt very much if Squire Leach will desert your store just to satisfy his son's grouch. I'll tell you what we'll do, fellows," turning to his companions. "We'll nip this project of Herbert's right in the bud. I'll tell him plainly that if he tries any monkey shines he'll find himself cut by all the fellows and the girls, too, of his set. That will bring him down on his knees pretty quick. He's soft on Flora Montgomery, and if she refuses to have anything to do with him that will break his heart. I think we've got him where the shoe pinches."

"I'm much obliged to you, boys, but I don't think it is necessary for you to go to all that trouble. I have been ac-

customed to look out for myself, and I guess I can continue to do so."

"That's all right, but it is time that Herbert Leach was taught a lesson for the general good, even without special reference to yourself. He's getting to be more cocky every day, and if something isn't done there'll be no standing him. He must be made to understand that he isn't the whole village. If I start in once I'll talk to him like a Dutch uncle. He knows I always say what I mean, and he's rather afraid of me. At any rate, he knows that I won't take any nonsense from him."

Just then Flora Montgomery, Bloodgood's sister and the other two girls entered the kitchen.

As soon as Flora saw Frank she went right up to him and took both his hands.

"Frank Fairfax, how can I ever thank you enough for saving my life? I want you to understand that I am very, very grateful to you. My mother and father will never forget what you have done for me this afternoon, nor will I."

"I am very happy to have been able to be of such service to you, Miss Montgomery. I feel that I have repaid you for saving me from being run over the night I came to the village for the first time."

"That was a very small service compared with the one you have just rendered me. You mustn't consider it at all in this matter. I want you to know that after this I am your friend for life."

"I accept your friendship gladly, Miss Montgomery. I seem to be acquiring many friends in this place. In Rockdale Center the people used to call me Friendless Frank, but I guess that doesn't go any longer."

"It certainly will apply to you no longer. My mother and father will be your friends, as well as I. And I am sure you can count on all of us in this room."

"That's what he can, Flora," spoke up Bloodgood. "He's built of the stuff I like, and a chap of that kind I always cotton to."

"Well," said Flora, "it's getting dark. We had better start for home."

"If you have no objection to riding in my sleigh, I'll be glad to give you all a lift into the village," said Frank.

"I'm sure we'll be glad to take advantage of your invitation," said Flora. "What do you say, girls? Of course, if we go the boys will go with us."

"I'm willing," replied Clara Bloodgood. "But you forget, Flora, that Herbert Leach left word that he was going to come after you in his sleigh."

"I didn't ask Herbert Leach to put himself to that trouble," replied Flora. "At any rate, I have accepted Frank Fairfax's invitation, and I am going home with the crowd," she added laughingly.

"The sleigh is awaiting your pleasure," said Frank, with his hand on the knob of the door. "Shall I escort you to your seat, Miss Montgomery?"

"Certainly," she replied, giving him her hand.

At that moment there came a knock on the door.

Frank opened it and there stood Herbert Leach.

Without noticing Fairfax, Herbert addressed himself to Flora.

"Are you ready to go home with me, Flora?" he said. "I've brought our sleigh out especially for you."

"I'm sorry you took all that trouble, Herbert Leach, for you'll have to excuse me accompanying you. I have just accepted an invitation from Frank Fairfax to go with him, and the rest of our crowd is going with me. Come," she added, turning to Frank, "let us go."

Herbert was all taken aback.

"You're not going in Mr. Packard's sleigh, are you?" he almost gasped.

"I am," she answered quite coolly, brushing by him and following Frank to the vehicle, where he assisted her up into the driver's seat.

The others trailed on behind.

"I'm sorry I cannot offer the rest of you young ladies seats," said Frank apologetically.

"Oh, we'll sit down in the straw," laughed Clara Bloodgood. "We don't mind that a bit. Do we, girls?"

The other girls thought it would be fun, and so when all hands had piled into the vehicle, Frank started the horse and away they went, without taking any further notice of Herbert Leach.

He glared after the merry party with rage in his heart.

It was against Frank that his resentment was chiefly directed.

"You're the cause of all this, you young beggar!" he

gritted, shaking his fist after the sleigh. "But I'll get square with you. I'll drive you out of Shadowbrook if I die for it. I'll see whether you can come here and crow over me."

CHAPTER X.

FRANK RECEIVES A VALUABLE PRESENT.

"I suppose even the best of friends must part," laughed Frank, as he opened the iron gate for Flora to enter the grounds.

"You're not going to run away in that fashion," she said, catching him by the arm. "You must come in and let me introduce you to my mother and father."

So he permitted her to take him into the house and present him to her parents.

George Bloodgood, when he called for Flora's clothes, had told Mrs. Montgomery about the narrow escape her daughter had had from drowning, and he gave the full credit for her rescue to Frank Fairfax, consequently Frank was received with open arms by Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery.

They both thanked him with much feeling for the service he had rendered their only child, and assured him that he must consider them his sincere friends henceforth.

Frank told them that he thought he hadn't done more than his duty.

"I'm a good swimmer, and you don't think I was going to stand by and see Miss Flora drown before my eyes. I simply did what anybody else ought to have done under the same circumstances."

Frank remained half an hour and then took his departure, after Flora made him promise to call upon her at an early date.

Then he drove back to the store, feeling happier than he had ever felt in his life before.

Mr. Packard had wondered greatly over his extended absence, but his explanation set matters all right.

The news of Flora's rescue was all over town next morning, and a full account of the incident, furnished by George Bloodgood, appeared in the "Times" that afternoon.

Some hours before the "Times" went to press, however, while Frank was away at Glendale after his mail, Mr. Packard received a note by a servant from Mrs. Leach complaining that her son Herbert had been insulted by his new clerk.

She concluded by saying that unless the storekeeper dispensed with the services of Frank Fairfax she would feel obliged to transfer her custom to the other store.

Mr. Packard showed the note to Frank when he got back, and asked him what trouble he had had with Herbert Leach.

Frank told him everything, including Herbert's threat.

"Very well," said the storekeeper, folding up the note and putting it in his pocket. "I shall be sorry to lose the trade of the Leaches, but nobody is going to bulldoze me into treating you unjustly. I shall probably call on Mrs. Leach and explain matters, but be the result what it may, you shall remain here."

That afternoon Mr. Packard called on Squire Leach and put the matter before him.

The lawyer listened to him and said he would look into the matter.

Whether the story that appeared in the "Times" about Frank's plucky rescue of Flora Montgomery had any influence with the squire and his wife or not, certain it is that Mr. Packard heard nothing further from them about a withdrawal of their trade from his store.

On Saturday afternoon a clerk from the bank delivered a package and a letter at the store for Frank.

The letter, which was signed by Mr. Montgomery, said that he hoped Frank would accept the enclosed order on a Glendale clothier for the best suit of clothes in his store, to replace the suit which the boy had worn when he jumped into the water after his daughter Flora.

He also hoped that Frank would accept the gold watch and chain and charm, sent herewith, as a recognition of his priceless service on that occasion.

He concluded by saying that he would ever consider himself the boy's debtor, and that if Frank wished a favor of him at any time he would be only too glad to grant it.

The young clerk then opened the package and found that the watch was an expensive and handsome one, while the chain and charm were quite in keeping with it.

"That's a better watch than Herbert Leach wears, and I have heard him say that he owns the finest watch, outside of his father and Banker Montgomery, in the village," said Mr. Packard, when Frank showed him his present.

"It's too fine for a poor boy like me to wear," said Frank, gazing at it admiringly.

"Not on Sundays, when you'll have your best suit on," said the storekeeper.

"Mr. Montgomery also sent me an order on Wainwright & Co., clothiers, of Glendale, for the best suit of clothes in their store," said Frank, exhibiting the order. "He seems to think that the old suit I'm wearing was spoiled by the water, but it is not. It's all right for everyday use in the store. I'll have three suits when I get this one. The good suit you bought me I've only worn twice."

"You need them all," replied the storekeeper. "The one you have on is a trifle shabby, and will soon have to give way to the suit I bought you. Go in and show your watch to Mrs. Packard. Then you'd better hitch up the horse to the sleigh and go to Glendale and get that outfit so you can look your best when you appear at church to-morrow."

Frank looked as stylish as Herbert Leach when he walked to church with the Packards next morning, and as he was far better looking, his appearance created quite a fluttering among the girlish hearts.

When Sunday-school time came around Frank went to Joe Norris' house as usual to accompany him and his sister, as well as Hattie Smith, who made it a point to be on hand.

"You're a swell, all right, Frank," said Joe admiringly, gazing a bit enviously at his friend's new suit.

"You look awfully stylish," said Joe's sister. "You put us in the shade."

"I hope not," replied Frank. "I don't want to put anybody in the shade."

"Doesn't he look handsome?" whispered Miss Smith to Miss Norris.

Joe's sister nodded, and wished that Frank was her beau.

Joe and the girls were pleased to notice that Frank did not put on any airs because of his improved appearance.

He was just the same Frank that he was in his old suit at the store.

"That's a bang-up chain you've got," said Joe, "and a dandy charm. Let's see your watch."

Frank pulled it out and exhibited it.

"Isn't it a grand one!" ejaculated Sadie Norris.

"It's a peach," said Joe. "Where did you get it?"

"Mr. Montgomery presented it to me—watch, chain and charm."

"For pulling Flora out of the river, eh?"

"As a kind of acknowledgment of my services on that occasion."

"It must be worth over \$100," said Joe.

When they reached the church Flora was approaching from the opposite direction in company with George Bloodgood and his sister.

Frank advanced to meet them.

Suddenly he was roughly elbowed aside by somebody, and, looking at the aggressor, he saw it was Herbert Leach who had passed him and was now bowing and holding his hand out to Flora.

The girl's sharp eyes had seen Herbert's action, consequently she merely nodded coldly at him and declined to shake hands.

Herbert was disconcerted by her icy manner, and his feelings were not improved when Flora rushed up to Frank and offered him her hand.

Not only that, but she continued on to the church porch with the store clerk without paying any further attention to Herbert.

On top of that, neither George Bloodgood nor his sister were over-cordial to him, for George was down on him for threatening to force Frank from the village.

Altogether, he found himself thrust quite into the background that afternoon, and that was a new and decidedly unpleasant sensation for him.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BURGLARY.

Four weeks passed away and during that time Frank found himself quite a lion among the young people of Shadowbrook.

He called regularly once a week on Flora, and was accepted as a social equal by all her friends, Herbert Leach excepted, but he didn't seem to count any more.

He attended two parties as Flora's escort, to Herbert's

secret rage, and had cut the lawyer's son out completely with the banker's lovely daughter, who made no secret of her preference for his society.

As a matter of fact, Frank's advent in Shadowbrook had brought about the complete extinguishment of Herbert Leach as a factor of any importance.

It was about this time that the three rascals who had tried to rob Mr. Packard's store were brought to trial in Glendale.

The public prosecutor did his best to convict them on Frank's evidence, backed up by their bad reputations, but the jury failed to agree on a verdict.

They were subsequently allowed to plead guilty to a charge of vagrancy, and the judge sent them to the work-house for three months.

Mr. Packard regarded Frank as a jewel of a clerk, and not only raised his wages two dollars a month more, but gave him as much time to enjoy himself on the outside as he could afford.

In fact, the storekeeper and his wife treated the boy almost like a son, and Frank showed his appreciation by giving his best services to them.

Thus three months more elapsed and early spring was at hand.

During that interval Frank continued to have the time of his life with the young people of Shadowbrook.

He was the one boy in Shadowbrook who drew no social line.

He attended the social gatherings of both classes of village society with perfect impartiality, conducting himself in a way to easily maintain his reputation as the most popular lad in the place.

Although he had half the girls at his feet, he paid particular attention to none of them but Flora.

And the banker's daughter gave him every encouragement to persevere.

Mr. Montgomery and his wife were very kind to him whenever he called.

The banker showed a great deal of interest in him, and gradually drew from him his hopes and future ambitions.

Finally Mr. Montgomery asked him if he would like to go to the Glendale Academy and prepare himself for college, offering to defray his expenses, not only at the academy, but at any college he subsequently decided that he would prefer to attend.

This was too good an offer to be refused, and Frank accepted it gratefully, so it was arranged that he should go to the academy at the close of the summer vacation.

Herbert Leach, finding that he either had to haul in his horns toward Fairfax or remain entirely out in the cold, adopted the former course, and reluctantly assumed a fairly civil attitude toward Frank.

But he hated him none the less, for he saw that he was completely supplanted in Flora's good books by the store boy, and would have welcomed any chance that promised the doing up of Fairfax.

The term of imprisonment of the three rascals, who had given their names as Jim Brady, Bill Ewing and Jude Goff, expired about the time and they were released.

In order to get them out of the county as quickly as possible they were each provided with a ticket for New York and a dollar in cash.

Instead of leaving they took up their quarters at an old decayed mill just outside of Shadowbrook, after investing their three dollars in food that would keep, as well as in a supply of liquor and tobacco.

The county authorities were not aware of this move on their part, and as they did not show themselves in the daytime, even the inhabitants of Shadowbrook and outskirts did not know that they had such undesirable neighbors.

The stream from the icy waters of, which Frank had rescued Flora Montgomery ran by the abandoned mill.

It had, in the days of the mill's usefulness, furnished power to drive the machinery, and about two-thirds of the big water wheel still hung dormant and moss-grown above the water-line.

One night the rascals, while foraging around the neighborhood, found a boat tied to a stake in a small creek.

They took possession of it and brought it to the mill, where they hid it in the reeds near the water-wheel.

Thus they provided themselves with a means of retreat by water in case circumstances prevented them from leaving the mill by land.

The rascals, after investigating the village thoroughly, decided to burglarize the residence of Squire Leach.

They owed him a grudge, anyway, because he had caused their detention in the village lock-up until their records had been looked up.

His fine house showed that he was well off, and while they did not know whether he kept much money about the premises, they calculated that there would be silverware enough in the house, as well as other valuables, to pay them for the risk they ran in the venture.

So, during the early hours of the morning they selected for the enterprise, they effected an entrance through one of the basement windows, and so quietly and effectively did they work that they secured three good-sized bag loads of valuable plunder, some of it from the very room in which the squire and his wife were sleeping, and left the house by the kitchen door without raising an alarm.

They carried their loot to the mill and hid it in the cellar where they had their quarters.

Naturally there was trouble when Squire Leach arose in the morning and discovered what had happened during the night.

He soon had the whole police force of the village, which consisted of the head constable and four deputies, at his house before breakfast.

The squire vowed to move heaven and earth to capture the burglars and mete out proper punishment to them.

A couple of detectives were brought from Glendale to help the local officers on the job, and they decided that it was the work of experts.

They failed to find any clue that would put them on the track of the rascals, though they scoured the neighborhood diligently, and even examined the old mill.

Jim Brady and his companions, when they saw the two detectives approaching the mill, had got into the boat, rowed in among the rushes and remained hidden there till they believed the coast was clear.

The news of the robbery flew through the village like wildfire, but the full particulars were not generally known until after the publication of the "Times" that afternoon, which devoted a full column to a description of the outrage.

Among the things stolen from the Leach home was Herbert's gold watch and chain, of which he had been so vain.

The burglars had also taken his gold sleeve buttons and his small diamond scarf pin, besides all his pocket money.

The loss of his property was a terrible calamity to Herbert.

He felt that he could not be seen in public without his watch, scarf pin and sleeve buttons.

They were as well known about the village as himself, for he had acquired the habit of showing them off.

The robbery was the main topic of conversation in the store that day.

Such a thing hadn't happened in Shadowbrook for a long time, and never on such a large scale, and consequently it produced a big sensation.

Joe Norris found it a sufficient excuse to cause him to leave his work and go to the store in order to talk the subject over with Frank Fairfax.

In fact, Joe was glad of any old excuse at times to get away from the carpenter work at which his father kept him employed.

Frank was weighing out some sugar for Hattie Smith when Joe entered.

Hattie was fooling with the scales in order to delay the operation as long as possible while she chatted with the good-looking clerk.

The appearance of Joe put a spoke in her wheel.

"What do you think of the robbery at Squire Leach's?" asked Joe eagerly.

"I think it was rough on the squire," replied Frank. "They say he's lost a lot of valuable property."

"I heard that Herbert Leach was cleaned out of all his valuables, too," grinned Joe, as if this piece of news tickled him not a little.

"I believe he lost a number of things, including his watch and chain," answered Frank, without showing any evidence of satisfaction.

"He must be crazy," went on Joe. "That watch and chain was the whole thing with him. He was never tired of looking at the time whenever anybody was around."

"His father is rich enough to get him another, I guess."

"He will probably have to wait for his birthday, whenever that is, and in the meantime he will have to go around without any. He'll feel like thirty cents."

"Well, we are all up against it some time."

"That idea won't console him. Who do you suppose the burglars were?"

"How should I know? I haven't the honor of their acquaintance."

"They must be beauts to get away with all the stuff they carried off without anybody in the house getting onto them."

"I dare say they knew their business."

"You can bet they did."

By that time Frank had the sugar and other things Hattie had called for done up in a package for her to carry away, and as she had no further excuse for remaining she bade Frank good-by with her sweetest smile and departed.

"I guess Hattie is dead sweet on you," said Joe, as the girl went out at the door.

"What makes you think she is?" replied Frank, with a slight frown.

"My sister told me she was. She talks about you all the time. She's got my sympathy, for I know she isn't in it."

"Girls are not worrying me any just at present," said Frank, brushing a few specks of sugar off the counter.

"You make an exception, don't you?" chuckled Joe.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, everybody says that you and Flora Montgomery understand each other."

"Then everybody is wrong," said Frank, flushing up, "as people generally are who butt into other people's business."

"Well, don't get mad over it. I just mentioned the matter, as it seems to be the general opinion that——"

"That will do, Joe. Change the subject."

So the conversation went back to the burglary again, but customers coming in to be waited on, Joe reluctantly took his leave and went back to work.

CHAPTER XII.

FRANK TRAPS THE BURGLARS.

On the following day, which was Saturday, Squire Leach posted a reward of \$500 in the Glendale "Daily Record" for information leading to the capture and conviction of the burglars who had looted his house, and the recovery of his property.

A copy of this advertisement was posted up in Mr. Packard's store and attracted some attention.

"I'd like to win that reward," Joe Norris remarked to Frank when he dropped in that evening and read it over. "Five hundred dollars would be a small fortune to me."

"Why don't you get out and hustle for it, then?" replied his friend.

"I would if I knew how to go about it."

"Buy a book and perhaps you'll learn the secrets of sleuthing," smiled Frank.

"There are two expert detectives on the job already, and I haven't heard that they've made any discovery yet. It's a wonder they couldn't find some sort of clue. Detectives aren't so much, after all. Why, you can read in the papers any day of crimes committed where the perpetrators get clean off in spite of the best detectives in the country. It is my opinion Squire Leach will never see his stolen property again. The burglars probably escaped up or down the river with it, and are in New York having a good time by this. Hello! here comes Hattie Smith. Blessed if she don't find more excuses to come into this store to see you than a fellow could keep track of. What are you after now, Hattie?"

Miss Smith wanted a certain brand of cereal for breakfast, and Frank proceeded to wrap it up for her.

"I'll be home all alone this evening, Mr. Fairfax," she said. "Father and mother are going to visit my aunt, who is sick."

"You'll be lonesome, won't you?" replied Frank. "Why don't you and your sister drop in and keep her company, Joe?"

"I'll tell my sister," grinned Joe. "I've got an engagement myself."

Hattie looked disappointed.

She had thrown out the hint hoping Frank might take it up himself and spend the evening with her, but it didn't work.

Frank had accepted an invitation to go to a party that evening at a farmhouse about three miles outside the village, and soon after supper he started on horseback for the scene of the festivities.

The road he had to traverse led past the old mill, and

when he went by he saw several flashes of light at the doorway, as if a man was lighting his pipe there.

"Some tramp has taken refuge there," he said to himself, and then he forgot all about the circumstance.

The party broke up at midnight, and Frank started for the store on his nag.

About half a mile from the mill the horse stumbled suddenly, went down on his knees and pitched the boy over his head.

Frank came into collision with an old log that lay against the fence and the shock deprived him of his senses.

The horse recovered himself and trotted off home, where he arrived in due course.

Several hours later Frank recovered consciousness.

At first he wondered where he was, and what had happened to him, but in a few minutes he recollected everything.

He got on his feet and looked around for his horse, but the animal wasn't in sight.

He took out his watch and tried to make out the time, but the night had turned cloudy and he could not see the hands.

Then he recollected that he had brought his matchesafe with him, so he took it out and struck a match.

"Gracious!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "Three o'clock. I have lain alongside that log about two hours and a half. I must have got a crack for fair. Yes, there is quite a lump on the side of my head, but it doesn't pain me now anything to speak of. I'll have to get a move on, or it will be daylight almost by the time I reach the store. Nap," short for Napoleon, the horse's name, "didn't make much by running away from me. He won't be able to get into the barn till I get back. I hope he finds it sufficiently amusing to wander about the yard. Well, here goes to foot it."

With these words Frank put his best foot forward.

When he reached the vicinity of the mill, which stood back about a hundred feet from the road, he heard the voices of men approaching along the road.

They were evidently on foot, and he wondered who they could be.

A loud imprecation finally floated toward him, and this, with the roughness of their tones, gave him the idea that he had better avoid meeting them.

So he drew back into the bushes, remaining very quiet, expecting they would soon pass by.

Presently they came into sight—three burly-looking men, each with a bag well filled with something over his shoulders.

When they reached the bushes behind which Frank was observing them, they came to a halt and threw their loads on the ground.

"This bag I'm carryin' is blamed heavy," said one of them, "but it's worth the trouble, all right," he added with a short laugh. "It's real silver, every ounce of it. We made a fine haul to-night. There'll be more fuss made over this job than there was about the other."

"What's the odds? We'll be away down the river by day-break. It's a lucky thing for us that sloop came to anchor near the mill this evenin'. It's just what we need to carry all our stuff to New York in safety," said one of the other two.

At that moment one of the men, who had been filling his pipe, flashed a match to light the tobacco.

The flare lit up the faces of all three.

Frank nearly betrayed himself by an exclamation of surprise.

He recognized the men as Jim Brady, Bill Ewing and Jude Goff, the three crooks whom he had failed to convict of the attempted robbery of Mr. Packard's store, and who had only recently been discharged from the county workhouse.

The men went on talking and Frank soon found out that they had just robbed Banker Montgomery's home.

He knew that the banker owned a silver service, which was used on special occasions, and which he set great store by, not only on account of its value, but because it had come to him from his parents years before.

When not wanted at the house it was kept in the vault of the bank.

Well, it was up to him to try and rescue it, as well as the other plunder, and he determined to leave no stone unturned to effect such a result.

After the men had rested themselves a bit they picked up their bundles and started for the old mill.

Frank followed them with great caution.

Instead of entering the building they went around to the rear.

He crept up as close as he dared and saw them put the bags in the bottom of a small rowboat, board it and row off into the gloom.

They didn't go far, for he heard them talking a short distance away, and easily made out the clink of the stuff in the bags as they were lifted aboard some craft.

Inside of a quarter of an hour the boat returned with the three men, who landed, after tying the painter to a stake.

They walked straight for the door of the mill and disappeared inside.

Frank crept after them, and, listening at the doorway, heard their footsteps descending a short flight of steps.

"They have gone into the cellar of the old mill to get the rest of their booty," he said to himself. "As soon as they get it aboard of the sloop close by they'll set sail down the river and be miles away by sunrise. What can I do to prevent them from getting away? If I could only trap them in the cellar by shutting down the wooden flap and putting some weight on it that would hold it down I'd have them dead to rights. The question is, can this be done? It looks to be the only feasible way to catch those rascals."

Frank slipped off his shoes and ran lightly across the floor to the trap.

He stuck his head down, but could only see that there was a dim light below.

Determined to see just what they were doing, he tiptoed his way down the steps.

Then he made out that they were digging up something from under a pile of rubbish in a corner of the cellar.

"I see now where all of the squire's stolen property is. If I can trap these rascals down here it will be \$500 in my pocket. Let me see if I can do it."

He ran up the steps, struck a match and looked around the ground floor of the old mill.

The trap was directly under the stairs that ran up to the second story.

There was nothing in the room but a stout stick of wood about three yards long.

He immediately closed the trap, got the piece of wood, and placing one end in the socket where the ring of the trap was, he jammed the other end against the bottom of one of the cross-pieces of the stairs.

Frank felt like yelling with delight, for the stick held the trap down as securely as a piece of wood in a vise.

Then he put on his shoes, went out of the mill and started for Constable Fisher's house to tell him what he had done.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAUGHT UNAWARES.

The clock was striking four when Frank reached Constable Fisher's house.

He thumped on the door fit to wake the dead, and presently an upper window was thrown up and the officer's head appeared.

"Who's there?" he inquired.

"Frank Fairfax."

"What's the trouble, Frank?" asked Mr. Fisher, in some surprise.

"Dress yourself and come down-stairs. I've got news for you about the burglars."

In a few minutes the officer opened the door and admitted him.

The boy hurriedly explained the situation to him.

Mr. Fisher was astonished at his story, and decided that prompt measures were in order lest the three rascals might manage to break out of the mill cellar some way.

He took Frank to his stable and they hitched up his horse to the light wagon.

Then they drove around a bit till they picked up two of the three deputies on duty at night.

After that the horse's head was turned toward the old mill.

When they arrived there the stick was found to be in the same position Frank had left it in.

It was removed, the trap thrown back and the three constables, with their dark lanterns and drawn revolvers, descended into the cellar, while Frank, with a policeman's billy, mounted guard over the opening.

The young clerk could hear the officers moving around below, and the absence of any other sounds made him fear that the rascals might have managed to make their escape through some hole in the cellar wall.

At last Constable Fisher and his deputies came up with word that the burglars were not in the cellar.

"They got away through a hole around the big shaft to which the wheel is attached, and which they enlarged in order to get through, the mortar being crumbly and the stones easily worked out," said the constable, in a tone of chagrin.

"Come outside," said the boy, "and I'll show you where they had their rowboat moored."

They followed him to the water's edge.

Of course the boat was missing now, while the soft ground was covered with many footprints.

"I'll have to follow the sloop in the wagon," said Constable Fisher. "It has had about an hour and a half's start. The trouble is whether they've gone up or down the stream."

"I overheard them say that they were going down. They're bound for New York, and consequently they'll have to go down to reach the Hudson. So you'd better chase in that direction along the river road. You're bound to head the sloop long before it can reach the Hudson. If they catch sight of you, and there's little doubt but they'll keep a sharp lookout for pursuit, they will run into one of the many little creeks along the stream and remain in hiding until night. Under these circumstances I think I'd better follow the stream on this side on foot and look into all the creeks as I come to them. It will be quite a tramp, but I'm determined to do my best to overhaul those rascals. I owe them a personal grudge, you know, because they stole everything I possessed in the world when I left Rockdale Center some months ago, and it would give me all the satisfaction in the world to be the cause of landing them in the State prison, where they belong. Will you let me have your revolver, Mr. Fisher?"

"Certainly, Frank; but I'm afraid if you should be so fortunate as to spot the scoundrels the three of them would be too much for you, even if you have the revolver."

"Don't you worry about me, Mr. Fisher," said Frank, with an air of resolution. "I will look after myself."

With these words Frank set off down the stream, while the constables hurried to their wagon and drove off towards Shadowbrook at a breakneck pace, to take the road on the other side of the river.

After half an hour's tramp Frank reached the Sharp farm. He went over to the house and the hired girl answered his knock on the kitchen door.

"Can I see Mr. Sharp?" asked Frank.

The girl shook her head.

"Mr. Sharp went to Buffalo yesterday morning and will not be back till to-morrow," she said, eyeing the well-dressed boy, whom she did not know, curiously.

"Then I would like to see your hired man."

"He went to Glendale half an hour ago," she replied.

"All right. Then I'll have to get along without him. Whose farm adjoins this?"

"Mr. Davenport's."

"Where is his house situated?"

"About a mile and a half from here, near the road," and she waved her arm in the direction that the farmhouse lay.

Frank decided that it was too far to tramp over from the stream, so, thanking the girl, he returned to the little river and continued his course.

His watch told him that it was seven o'clock.

The river gradually widened out as he proceeded, but owing to the curves he could at no time see more than a quarter of a mile ahead.

In a short time he struck a creek which barred his further progress.

There was no means of crossing it near the river, and besides it was his intention to investigate the little stream to see whether the sloop had slipped in there for shelter, for, now that it was broad daylight, the rascals would understand that to continue their flight by the river was to expose themselves to considerable danger.

The creek only ran up a short distance and there was no place of concealment in it for craft of any kind.

Frank waded it a quarter of a mile from the river and then kept on his way.

His watch was on the figure of nine when he struck another and wider creek.

It led into the heart of a big farm.

The ground rose up on either side of it, forming bluffs about twenty feet high.

These gradually sloped downward as Frank followed its course, and then its sides became lined with trees.

"This would be a fine place for those fellows to seek shelter," thought the boy, as he noticed the secluded nature of

the creek. "They could lie low here all day, especially on a Sunday, and no one would be the wiser of their presence. I must keep my eyes open. The sloop may be up here somewhere."

As Frank pushed his way among the trees he suddenly made out the stern of a small vessel, then the open cockpit, and then the single mast sprouting from the roof of a small cabin, the door of which was pushed open to its fullest extent.

The boom lay almost directly fore and aft, and the sail hung around it unfurled, just as it had been lowered.

"By George! I believe that's the craft I'm after," exclaimed the boy, excitedly. "If it is the rascals must be in the cabin, for I don't see a sign of them."

As he uttered the words he was suddenly pounced upon from behind, and at the same time he received a blow from a fist in the head.

The blow, however, was not very effective, owing to the fact that he had sprung to one side the moment he felt himself grabbed.

With great agility he squirmed free and turned around to face his assailants.

He was not surprised to find that he was up against the three rascals, who had been watching in the wood and observed his approach.

The next moment they jumped at him and a desperate struggle ensued.

CHAPTER XIV.

FRANK TURNS THE TABLES ON HIS CAPTORS.

Three against one, especially three such burly rescals as Jim Brady, Bill Ewing and Jude Goff, was overwhelming odds for Frank Fairfax to cope with successfully.

The result was he was soon overcome and at their mercy.

"It's you, is it, you derved young monkey!" gritted Brady, as they held him helpless on his back. "Been followin' us, eh? Thought maybe you'd catch us off our guard? We cut our eye-teeth long ago, young feller. I s'pose it was you who trapped us in the mill? Sure you had us dead, wasn't yer?" he grinned malevolently. "Well, the boot is on the other leg now, and I reckon we'll make yer wish yer hadn't butted into our business before we're through with yer. I've a great mind to throttle yer and pitch yer into the creek. You turned the trick on us once, but it's our game this time. It was all on your account we spent three months in the workhouse, and we're goin' to pay yer for it. First, we'll help ourselves to what yer've got about yer."

The speaker yanked Frank's elegant watch out of his vest pocket.

Ewing got some thin rope and Frank's arms were soon secured behind his back.

Then they gagged him by tying a handkerchief across his mouth.

"Take him into the cabin and leave him," said Brady, who was clearly the boss of the party.

Goff and Ewing raised the boy between them and carried him aboard the small sloop.

They dropped him on the cabin floor with little ceremony and then left, closing the slide after them.

A couple of hours passed on leaden wings before Frank saw the ruffians again.

Then they came into the cabin and, without paying the slightest attention to him, made a meal off crackers, cheese and dried beef, washing it down with some whisky they had left in a bottle, and which was the last of their supply.

They hung around the cabin all the afternoon, smoking and sleeping, one of them, however, being constantly on the watch out among the trees.

Nothing turned up to cause them any alarm, and they were well satisfied with the outlook.

As soon as it began to grow dark the rascals worked the sloop down the creek to the river by hauling her sternward with a rope.

Then they got aboard, hoisted the mainsail and jib and started down the stream.

They did not know any too much about sailing the craft, but had managed very well that morning in the light wind.

Darkness and the stiff breeze that was now blowing, coupled with the narrowness of the river, involved them in difficulties that culminated in the sloop going ashore and grounding so hard that they couldn't get her off.

They were now in a very ticklish situation and made the

air blue with their imprecations, just as if that would help them out of their trouble.

Had they understood about the rise and fall of tides they would soon have found out that it was low water then in the river.

Frank, as he lay on the cabin floor, felt the sloop ground, and when he understood from the talk and confusion of the rascals that the boat appeared to be hard and fast he began to take hope.

He had long since succeeded in working his hands loose, and only waited for a good chance to make a break for liberty.

When he saw that his captors were busily engaged at the bow of the boat, up to their knees in water, trying in vain to shove the sloop off, he shook himself free of his bonds, tore the gag from his mouth, and crept out into the cockpit.

Recollecting that Jim Brady, who had taken the constable's revolver from his pocket, had laid it on one of the lockers in the cabin, he went back and got it.

After listening to the movements of the men, and their shocking expletives, he crawled over the stern of the sloop and let himself down into the water, which was hardly up to his waist.

Then, having made up his mind that the situation called for strenuous measures, he crouched down in the water, revolver in hand, and waited to see what the rascals would do next.

They presently boarded the sloop and held a consultation about what they should do to get off with their plunder.

Frank listened to their talk, and laughed to himself when he saw that they seemed to be at their wit's end.

Finally Jim Brady said:

"We'll have to sort the stuff over, pick out the most valuable, fill three bags with as much as we can comfortably carry, and let the rest go. There ain't no other way of doin' that I kin see, even if we argue the matter all night."

"It's a shame to leave a lot of valuable swag behind, but I suppose there hain't no other way to do," said Jude Goff.

The matter being thus determined, the three men entered the cabin to make the selection of the booty they intended to carry away.

It immediately occurred to Frank that here was a chance to trap them in the cabin by closing the slide, if there was any way of securing it.

He determined to take the chance, and if it failed he would hold them in the place at the point of his revolver.

If they tried to get out he would fire at the first who made the attempt, and he believed that the situation justified him in proceeding to that extreme, much as he objected to shedding human blood.

As Frank crawled into the cockpit, Brady flashed a match in order to light the lantern that hung from a nail in the bulkhead.

Even by the uncertain gleam of the match the rascals at once noticed that their prisoner was gone.

This discovery carried consternation to their minds.

He was gone, and therefore it behooved them to get away themselves with the utmost speed, before he could bring a sufficient force back to capture them.

That's the way they argued the matter after they recovered from their surprise and rage.

While they were talking the matter over, and Brady was lighting the lantern, Frank had ascertained that the sliding door could be fastened by a hasp and staple attachment.

Seeing that the men were busily engaged in overhauling their bags of plunder, he gently worked the door shut, without attracting their attention, and secured it.

The door was a stout one, so was the hasp and staple, and Frank guessed they would have the job of their lives trying to force it unless they found some heavy implement in the cabin to aid them.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW FRANK BECAME FAMOUS.

Frank felt satisfied now that he had the rascals where he wanted them, and that the stolen property would soon be restored to its owners.

He had slept the greater part of the afternoon, in spite of his uncomfortable position, for he was tired out, and

when he was awakened by the sloop getting under way, he felt quite bright once more.

Consequently all that bothered him now was the emptiness of his stomach, but there was no remedy for that at present, and Frank was full of the grit that carries the man of force and stamina through all difficulties and discouragements.

He made up his mind that he probably would have to mount guard over his prisoners all night, since the boat had grounded at a lonesome reach of the river where even a pistol shot was not likely to attract particular attention.

"I wonder where Constable Fisher and his men are?" he asked himself. "No doubt they drove down the road much further than this vicinity. As they missed the sloop during daylight, it is likely they are watching for her at some favorable point in anticipation of nabbing her when she slips down in the darkness. They'll have their watch for nothing, for this craft seems to be a fixture, and unless the tide rises high enough to float her, she'll stay here until she's got off by somebody who knows how to do the job."

In the meantime the men were working hard in the cabin sorting out their spoils.

If they casually noticed that the door was shut, the fact did not arouse their suspicions, as all their attention was engrossed with the work in hand.

It was when they were ready to abandon the boat, twenty minutes later, that Jim Brady, who started first, discovered that they were caged.

Frank heard the sliding door rattle and knew that matters had reached a focus.

Brady began to swear like a trooper and pounded fiercely on the panel.

Then he threw his body at it in an effort to force it, but the effort was vain.

After that he kicked it vigorously, without effect.

The rascals realized that they had been locked in, and they at once jumped to the natural conclusion that their late prisoner had worked the trick on them.

To be made the victim of a mere boy was gall and wormwood to them.

They raged about the cabin and tried to find some implement with which to force the door, but they were disappointed.

There wasn't a thing that was of any avail for the purpose.

Then it was that Brady thought of the revolver, and when he found it was gone he was more furious than ever.

The three attacked the door together, trying by their united strength to make an impression on it, but they could not work effectively, owing to the smallness of the panel.

Finally they had to give the job up, for a while, at any rate.

Brady called out to Frank, who he supposed was outside.

He tried to bribe the boy, and when the young clerk made no answer he resorted to threats.

Frank listened in absolute silence.

He saw no use in holding any parley with them.

He was master of the situation, and meant to remain so. Thus an hour passed away, and then the crooks assaulted the door with renewed vigor.

They did not succeed any better than before.

They grew more desperate each moment, but their desperation did not change the situation any.

As time passed the tide rose under the sloop, lifting her by degrees, until when it reached its highest point the craft floated free, and, the wind catching the mainsail, she began to sail off into the river in a wobbly fashion.

Frank was not a boatman, but he knew that he must do something to keep the sloop from grounding on the shore again.

He grabbed the tiller and moved it at random.

The result was the boat came about, the boom swung over in the opposite direction, and she was soon headed up the river the way she had come, under a light breeze.

If it hadn't been light, and things hadn't worked right of their own accord, the sloop would either have capsized or gone ashore on the opposite bank of the stream.

However, but for the luck that follows some people in this world, Frank would soon have run himself into trouble.

As the sloop drew near a bend of the river where she surely must have grounded in the darkness, the moon suddenly came out, and Frank was enabled to avoid that misfortune by altering the boat's course.

Gradually he got confidence in the job he had been obliged

to tackle, and soon he found it a matter of no great difficulty to keep pretty nearly in the center of the stream.

The men in the cabin found out by the motion of the sloop that she was under way, and they renewed their efforts to force the door, but without the least success.

They finally had to throw up their hands and admit that they were in the soup.

The clouds which had obscured the sky during the early part of the evening dispersed and allowed the moon full sway, and this was a great boon to the plucky boy who was finishing an adventure that, for perseverance, nerve and endurance, made him famous throughout the county when the facts were published by the Glendale "Record" on Tuesday morning and copied by every other journal in the county and by half the papers of the State, including one big New York daily.

And now to go back a few hours.

When Mr. Packard got up that Sunday morning and looked out of his window into the yard he was surprised to see his horse, Napoleon, standing, with his saddle on, rubbing his nose against the barn door.

"What can that mean?" he asked himself. "Frank would not leave the animal out all night in that fashion. Something must have happened to the boy."

To make sure about the matter he went to Frank's room and found that he was not there, nor was the bed disturbed.

Clearly Frank had not been in the house all night, though the storekeeper knew that the party his clerk had attended was to break up at midnight.

Mr. Packard got into his clothes with more than his customary dispatch, and went into the yard.

There was nothing about the horse that gave a clue to the mystery that puzzled him, so he mounted him and started for the farm house where the party had been held, keeping a bright lookout along the road for the boy he was after.

Of course he saw no signs of Frank, and when he reached the farm house he was informed that the lad had left for home shortly after midnight.

The people were surprised to learn that Frank had not got home but the horse had.

Mr. Packard then hurried back to Shadowbrook and went to Constable Fisher's house.

While he was waiting to be admitted, one of Mr. Montgomery's servants came up in a state of great excitement with the startling news that the banker's home had been burglarized in much the same way that Squire Leach's residence had been cleaned out.

Then both the storekeeper and the servant were told by Mrs. Fisher that her husband had been aroused about four o'clock by Frank Fairfax, who brought some intelligence about the crooks who had robbed the squire's home, and that the constable had gone off with him.

The news of the robbery at the Montgomery mansion flew like wildfire through the village, and created considerable consternation.

Mr. Montgomery telephoned to Glendale the information of the burglary, and asked that detectives be detailed on the case at once.

Before the two officers dispatched for that service reached Shadowbrook it was known throughout the village that Constable Fisher, three of his four deputies and Frank Fairfax were on the trail of the crooks.

So anxious was Mr. Montgomery to recover his family silver service that he offered \$2,000 reward to spur the officers on their quest.

From what the constable's wife had said about Frank rousing her husband out of his bed before daylight, the impression prevailed throughout the village that the boy had in some way got a clue to the burglars, and all wondered how he had come by it.

The day passed, however, and no word was received from any one on the job.

About eleven o'clock that night, the Brown family, residing close to the bridge that spanned the upper reach of the river, where Frank had rescued Flora Montgomery after she had broken through the ice, were aroused by an insistent hammering on their front door.

Brown, in a state of dishabille, opened his chamber window and inquired what was wanted.

"I'm Frank Fairfax. Get into your clothes and come downstairs. I've caught the three burglars who robbed the houses of Squire Leach and Mr. Montgomery, and I've recovered all the stolen goods."

Mr. Brown was astonished, but he lost no time in dressing himself and coming downstairs to learn further particulars.

"Rouse up your hired man and then fetch me something to eat. I haven't tasted a mouthful in twenty-four hours. Bring any old thing in the way of food and a jug of milk or water. I'm parched to death."

At Frank's request Mr. Brown dispatched his hired hand to Mr. Montgomery's residence to notify him of the state of affairs.

The banker returned with him in his big sleigh, accompanied by two men servants.

Frank told him his story in detail.

"Frank Fairfax, you are one boy in a thousand!" he said, enthusiastically. "You have accomplished what the united police force of Glendale and this village failed to do. Upon my word, you ought to be awarded a gold medal. However, you will receive the united rewards offered by me and Squire Leach, and I'll raise mine another thousand, for you richly deserve it."

Under the light of a lantern the cabin door was unlocked and the crooks were ordered out one by one, and securely bound.

All the stolen property was loaded on the banker's sleigh and carried to his house, where the squire recovered his portion next day.

The burglars were locked in the cabin of the sloop again, and on the following morning were turned over to Constable Fisher, and subsequently taken to Glendale for trial.

They were duly tried, convicted and sent to the State prison for a long term of years, and are still working out their sentences.

Frank was now regarded as the most famous boy in Blank County, if not in the entire State, and his other plucky deeds sank into insignificance beside his exploit of capturing the three burglars single-handed and recovering the whole of the stolen property.

Of course he received the two rewards, but the reputation he had made for himself was far more valuable than a dozen such rewards.

In the early fall he began his studies at the Glendale Academy, and graduated with honors in two years.

He then entered Cornell University.

The night before he left Shadowbrook to begin his college career he called on Flora and her family.

When the fair girl accompanied him out on the porch to say the final good-by, they stood together in the calm moonlight for some minutes without speaking.

"You'll miss me, Flora, won't you?" he said with some emotion in his voice.

"Miss you, Frank?" faltered the girl. "Don't you know that I will?"

"Yes," he said, stealing his arm around her slender waist, "I feel sure that you will. And I will miss you more than I can tell. I hate to leave you for—well, what is the use of hiding my secret any longer? I love you, Flora—love you dearer than anything else in the world. May I hope that when I am ready to begin life in earnest you will consent to share that life with me? Will you, Flora?"

"Yes, Frank, I will, for I love you with all my heart."

He drew her to him and kissed her fondly.

"I came to Shadowbrook two years and a half ago a friendless, penniless boy," he said, "and the first hand lifted in my behalf was yours. But for your timely action that snowy evening my fate might have been far different than what it is. Now that you have acknowledged your love for me I am the happiest boy in the world. To-night I have all that I can desire—the heart of the girl I love, the friendship of her generous parents, and the respect and good will of everyone in Shadowbrook, even Herbert Leach, my only one-time enemy. How different was it that snowy night. I had nothing then but my health and strength. I was only Friendless Frank."

Next week's issue will contain "A \$30,000 TIP; OR, THE YOUNG WEAZEL OF WALL STREET."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

One of the oddest decorations for a lawn is seen by those who pass the home of Alexander Billmeyer of Washingtonville, Pa. Mr. Billmeyer is engaged in raising elk for the market and he has placed a number of elk horns all over the lawn for decorative purposes.

The long reign of the yardstick in the dry goods and trimming store threatens to be ended by a new invention known as the measuregraph, which is a mechanical means of indicating yardage and simultaneously indicating the total cost of the material being measured.

A fine of one cent and two minutes imprisonment in a court room chair was the punishment imposed on Michael Levin by Federal Judge Landis, Chicago. Levin, who is twenty years old, had been found guilty of falsifying concerning his age to obtain a postoffice position.

According to statistics for the year 1915, which are now available, the population of Russia increased by 53,000,000, or forty-three per cent., since 1897. The population increased by 3,800,000, or more than two per cent., since 1914. The total population is set down as 182,182,600.

A piece ofhardtack which he shared with a comrade during the Civil War brought Fred Wenz, of St. Joseph, Mo., a dressed spring chicken in return the other day. Mr. Wenz and a fellow trooper were taken prisoners and were given no food by their captor. Food gave out, but Mr. Wenz had eaten sparingly of the supply he had when taken, and shared it. After fifty years he was repaid for his kindness.

Mr. Behn became interested in the telephone business in Porto Rico some years ago, when he and his brother, Hernand Behn, who succeeds him as president of the Porto Rico Telephone Company, obtained control of the telephone system of Porto Rico. This system they have greatly improved and extended. It now operates 5,000 telephones and is running wires into Utuado and other towns in the coffee districts.

An automobile equipped with mechanical devices by which a crew of tree surgeons can carry on all the operations of their trade, has been employed in trimming and treating certain groves in New England. The entire outfit is self-containing and can be moved from point to point easily and rapidly.

The appliances are driven by compressed air secured from a pump operated by the automobile's motor. With this outfit several men are able to work on one or more trees at the same time.

A most unusual aeronautical experiment is being carried out by German experts, according to Popular Mechanics. It deals with the development of a powerful flying boat which carries, for both defensive and offensive purposes, a swift, mosquito-like aeroplane on its back. The machine, when last heard of, was being put through test flights, but had not at that time been sufficiently refined to warrant its actual use. The new machine has such remarkable stability, carrying capacity, and cruising radius, that its engineers think it can be made to replace the bulky, highly expensive Zeppelins which have proved disappointing.

A little stray terrier fell under a street car. One hind leg was broken, and after the quick howl and three-legged scurry of the first fright, the little dog dragged itself, sad-eyed and trembling, down past the General Hospital, of Madison, Wis. A nurse, touched at the sight brought it in. An interne joked good-humoredly at the nurse's pity, but he set the leg in splints. The little terrier was fed and petted, until now his broken leg is healed and nearly as good as ever. But the little stray terrier has made the hospital his home. He refuses to leave, now the cure is accomplished—so the staff adopted him, and he wags welcome to all the patients and surgeons as they reach the front porch.

In some parts of Indo-China the natives employ various fibers in the attempt to supply their own paper. The Village du Papier, a suburb of Hanoi, owes its name to the fact that most of its 2,000 or 3,000 inhabitants make paper from the bark of a small "paper tree," a species of mulberry, found on the Black river in upper Tonkin. This bark is soaked in lime made from the limestone of the village, heated by crude furnaces fashioned by hand under natural limestone vats, pounded by pestle into a fine mash, then dissolved in water until a thin paste is reached. This paste is dipped by bamboo-screen sieves, about 12 by 24 inches in dimensions, until a slight film covers the screen. This film is spread on top of others and each is taken separately or several together and spread with a brush on cement radiators to dry. A single sheet of paper is almost as thin as tissue; but the desired thickness may be obtained by spreading several films on the radiator and drying them together, or by pasting the requisite number of sheets together, after drying.

TURNED OUT WEST

OR

THE BOY WHO FOUND A GOLD MINE

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XX (Continued).

"Don't bank on that too heavy," Leon. We might be wrong, after all."

"Hark! Don't you hear voices?"

"Seems to me I hear whispering. All the same, I can't be sure. Yes, by thunder, I hear them now."

"If I only had a gun," groaned Jack; "but those villains have cleaned me out of everything. Hold on! There's the light again."

It came flashing through the hole, and now the boys could distinctly hear someone crawling into the tunnel.

In a few seconds a head was thrust through the hole, and two keen, glittering eyes were turned upon them.

It was an Indian!

Long black hair hung down over his shoulders; there was a band of feathers securing it, and a big gray eagle's feather rose above the rest.

"Well?" the fellow exclaimed in the same deep voice which had previously spoken, "what's doing in here?"

"Charley Shin, by gracious!" breathed Jack.

"That you, Jack Fox?" demanded the Indian.

"That's who it is. What in thunder brings you here?"

"Never mind. Who's that feller? Is he Leon Mack?"

"That's me," said Leon.

"And what's the matter with Pete Pigeon?"

"He's dead," said Jack.

"Ugh!" exclaimed the Indian. "Who killed him?"

"One of Buck Sheehan's bunch. I can't tell who fired the shot."

"Ugh!" cried the Indian again. "Stop where you are, Jack. I'll be back in a minute."

The head was then withdrawn, and the light faded away.

"Who is he?" whispered Leon. "What are we up against now?"

"It's Charley Shin; he's a Navajo half-breed," replied Jack. "Don't do any loud talking, Leon; we don't want to bring any of the gang in on this deal, and this tunnel echoes like thunder."

"Friend of yours?"

"Oh, yes. He used to hang around the Alhambra. I've known him ever since he was a little boy. Ten

to one Pepita is with him. They were sweet on each other all right. Hush! Here he comes again."

Once more the light struck through the hole, and Charley Shin came after it, crawling into the tunnel and springing to his feet.

"Are you fellows prisoners here?" he demanded.

"That's what we are, Charley," said Jack.

"Why didn't you come back to the hut? You were there before with Pete Pigeon, weren't you?"

Jack explained.

The Indian listened attentively.

"That's all right, Jack," he said. "You fellows are in the soup, but we will get you out of it. Come on to the hut. Pepita is there."

"As I thought," said Jack. "Was it you who hol-lered, Charley?"

"Sure it was. We thought the gang were still here. I didn't intend to let them through that hole in the wall, that's all. I would have shot every mother's son of them if they had tried it. Come on; but say, Pete has got papers on him that Pepita wants. I must get them out of his pocket first."

"I've got them," said Leon.

"Give them up!" cried Charley, almost fiercely. "They don't belong to you."

It was no time for argument, and, after all, if Jack was right, then the papers did not amount to anything, so Leon handed them over without a word.

"Now come on," said Charley; "can you stand on your feet, Jack Fox?"

"No, I can't, but I can crawl," replied Jack.

"Go ahead. Pepita is there. She will lend you a hand. You follow him, Mack. I'll put the barrow in place. I don't suppose we can keep this opening concealed from that bunch very long, but at least we can try."

Here was a half-breed speaking English better than Jack, which to Leon was something of a mystery.

He had yet to learn that Charley Shin had been educated at the Indian school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, but already Leon had recognized the fellow as about the brightest proposition he had yet encountered in the Far West.

With many a groan Jack crawled through the hole, and when Leon got out on the other side he saw the Mexican girl with whom he had danced at

the Alhambra standing beside him, holding a lantern.

Pepita's black eyes snapped and she looked at him. She came forward and held out her hand.

"Hello, Cousin Leon!" she exclaimed. "I suppose you remember me?"

"Don't I!" cried Leon, shaking hands, but I didn't suppose you knew who I was."

"I didn't the night we danced together," said Pepita, "and a mighty good dancer you are, all the same; but I have always known that I had a cousin named Leon Mack kicking about the world somewhere, and I knew that that fraud at the Virgo Mine wasn't the one; my poor father told me that."

Tears came into the girl's eyes, but she brushed them away.

"You fellows buried him?" she asked. "Charley and I came back to attend to that. I suppose he is under that heap of stones?"

"Yes," said Leon, "and there is another to be buried now."

"Poor Pete!"

"Yes."

"He wasn't so bad when he let the whisky alone. It killed my father. Blame the stuff! I wish there was none in the world. It killed your father, too, Jack Fox, but he deserved it. He helped to kill a lot with his poison—there, there, I didn't mean it, Jack. Forgive me. Your father was always good to us, but all the same——"

"All the same, what you say is true, Pepita," sighed Jack, "and I tell you one thing right now, if ever I live to get back to Tombstone I mean to sell the Alhambra. I shall never sell another drop of whisky as long as I live."

"Stick to it," said Pepita; "but here comes Charley; boys, let me introduce my husband. There, Jack Fox, I've surprised you. I s'pose you didn't know that I married Charley last week?"

Here were friends at last, and they proved to be far more powerful ones than either Leon or Jack guessed then.

"Come into the hut, Jack Fox," said the half-breed. "I want you to show me that foot of yours; perhaps I can fix it all right."

"I wish to heavens you would, then," replied Jack, "for it is hurting me terribly. Hadn't Leon better stay on the watch?"

"It isn't necessary," said Charley. "I have put a flat stone against the hole on this side, and if it falls I shall surely hear it. Come on, all of you; we are safe enough."

It was a lucky thing for Jack that he met Charley Shin, or he might have been laid up for weeks.

Jack hobbled to a chair, and Charley, baring his foot, which was now beginning to swell at the angle, examined it carefully.

"It is dislocated," he said. "If you hadn't come up against me you might never have walked on it again. Can you bear a little pain?"

"As much as an Injun any day in the week," growled Jack.

"We will see about that," said Charley, and, seizing the ankle, he gave it a sudden twist at which Jack fairly howled.

"All over," laughed the half-breed, "and that isn't the way we Indians bear pain. Go light on it now for a few days, and it will soon be all right. Here, Pepita, are the papers Pete Pigeon had on him. You are now the sole owner of the Jesuit mine."

A long talk followed.

Leon told his story, and Charley Shin listened with close attention.

"You found the mine, all right," he said, "but my wife was ahead of you—understand that."

"I do understand it," said Leon. "I lay no claim to the mine."

"And if I am the sole owner, then I have got something to say about it," added Pepita. "What good is the mine to me or to my husband? We haven't got a cent; it is far off the road to anywhere, and it will cost a barrel of money to even get away with the gold in that ore pile around in the other valley. If we try to sell out, we shall surely be swindled. What I want is a partner, Cousin Leon, and I believe you are the right man."

"If I can get hold of the controlling interest of the Virgo, which rightfully belongs to me," said Leon, "we can get money enough."

"Exactly my father's words, spoken just before his death," added Pepita. "Are you willing to go into partnership with me if I can help you to down your step-brother and oust him from the Virgo Mine?"

"I am! Indeed I am! I believe this old Jesuit mine to be the richest ever."

"And you can bank on that," put in Jack. "but the other part of the proposition is easier said than done."

"Charley," said Pepita, "now it's your turn."

"If you want help I can get it for you," replied Charley. "I'll agree to chase that gang out of the valley all right."

"You are living with your tribe?" demanded Jack, quickly. "I heard that three weeks ago."

"I am," said Charley, "and they are in camp within ten miles of here. If you fellows want their help Pepita is willing, and all you have to do is to say the word."

And Leon did say the word.

The interests at stake were too great for him to be mealy-mouthed about the matter.

Moreover, Jack was strongly in favor of enlisting the services of the Indians, for he had not forgotten his father's death, and the fact that the traitor, Billy Behrends, was with Buck Sheehan's gang.

Charley Shin and his wife had ridden into the valley on two sturdy little Indian ponies, and these were now standing, ready saddled, beyond the rude barn where Leon's horses had been tied up.

The start was soon made.

(To be continued.)

FACTS WORTH READING

SLAB 75,000,000 YEARS OLD.

A slab of sandstone stands on edge in the bed of an Ohio stream. It has peculiar markings made in times past by ripples when the stone was soft sand. The layer of rock from which this slab was broken extends far back into the bank of the stream, says *Popular Science Monthly*, and comes to light in a quarry a mile distant. In fact, when the ripple marks were formed it was the soft sand of an ocean shore.

SAVED BY SQUAWK OF A CHICKEN.

The squawk of a chicken he was carrying home for Sunday dinner probably saved the life of Roy Ferguson, business man, when his automobile skidded and turned over on a country road, near Mason City, Iowa. The noise made by the pullet attracted a farmer near by and Ferguson was found pinned under his car, not seriously hurt, but unconscious from gas fumes, which would have caused his death in a few minutes.

MARCONI NOW IN THE NAVY.

Marconi, who since the outbreak of the war has been appointed a lieutenant in the engineers and attached to the aeronautical service, has now been transferred to the navy with the rank of lieutenant-commander, equivalent to that of major in the army. His transfer has, therefore, been also a promotion.

It is reported on good authority that Lieutenant-Commander Marconi will have charge of both the naval wireless and aeronautical services, which will be reorganized and improved with the introduction of recent inventions, already successfully experimented, and destined to play an important part in the forthcoming naval operations in the Adriatic.

HUGE BEACON FIRES.

People living along the American shore of the St. Croix River got the impression one night recently that the entire Province of New Brunswick was burning up, for everywhere on the Canadian side of the line the sky was aflame, as if reflecting a great conflagration. There were no devastating fires in the province, however. It was merely the revival of an ancient Scottish method of calling men to arms. The light came from many huge bonfires (beacons) kindled on hills and mountains as signals that men were wanted for the 236th Kilties Regiment.

On fifteen heights the fires blazed, and in as many cities and towns meetings were held, with torches and pipers' bands, Scottish dancers and orators, the latter chiefly returned soldiers. These meetings are to be continued for fifteen nights, so that there

will be 225 meetings in all, and at the end, it is expected, the depleted ranks of the regiment will be filled.

All sorts of recruiting schemes have been tried in the Maritime Province, each with some degree of success, but it is believed that for bringing Scots and their descendants to the colors there is nothing like a revival of the old Highland war beacons and the sound of the pipes.

THE ORIGINAL BOWIE KNIFE.

Every one, even an actor, saves something—stamps, old coins, trinkets of various kinds—and a few, money.

William Farnum, of the Fox Film Company, is no exception to the rule. The big William Fox star has a collection of daggers and swords which includes nearly everything except the sword of Damocles.

In this collection is the original knife of which Colonel Bowie gave his name. The blade was presented to the "screen Samson" by a kinsman of Edwin Forrest, the famous actor, to whom Colonel Bowie first gave it.

"Forrest always wore the knife when he played 'Metamora,'" Farnum says.

"Bowie himself was a man of great ingenuity," Farnum continued, "and invented the knife while he lay in bed, recovering from a wound inflicted in a brawl. He whittled from a piece of white pine the model of a hunting-knife and then sent it to Natchez, Miss., where he had it duplicated in steel.

"Louis Forrest, from whom I have the knife, says that this was the origin of the dreaded weapon.

"It is made from a large saw-mill file, and had a two-edge blade nine inches long, of a faintly curved outline, and thick enough at the back where it joins the handle to serve for sturdy hammering.

"Colonel Bowie's knife caused a lot of derision when it made its first appearance, but it won wide respect as the list of victims grew.

"From what I know, it is only fair to say that he believed essentially in justice, anyway. A story is told of Bowie in the church of a rough Texas town of the thirties.

"When the minister started to preach, one member of the congregation brayed in imitation of an ass, another hooted like an owl, and so on. The clergyman stood silent and still, not knowing whether to vacate the pulpit or not.

"While he deliberated, Bowie arose and shouted:

"'Cut it out! Jim Bowie says so.'

"There was no more disorder in that church."

Mr. Farnum has just returned from a vacation in the Catalina Islands and will soon begin work on a new photoplay.

ON TOP

OR

THE BOY WHO GOT THERE

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER IV.

TIFF MAKES A FRIEND.

After he had gone Tiff waited a safe period and then slid down lightly from the hay-mow. He crept to the stable door and opened it softly.

Adjoining the stable was a house. He saw light flash from a door as it opened and was closed. He guessed that Melton had entered the house and this was doubtless his home.

Tiff was now fully alive to the exigency before him. All depended upon him, and he was determined not to be found wanting. There was work for him to do.

Tiff Clark was face to face with a most startling exigency. Fate had placed in his hands the knowledge of a contemplated robbery. The arch-conspirator of the job was the trusted secretary of Daniel Burton, the merchant.

Upon emerging from the barn Tiff was for a time in a quandary. His first thought was to go at once to the police with his story.

But on reflection he decided not to do this. He would first carry the warning to Daniel Burton himself.

With this plan in view, Tiff quickly crept out of the yard and gained the street. He knew that it was a late hour, for the street was deserted. He ran down the street rapidly.

Tiff did not know where Mr. Burton lived. After he had proceeded some distance it occurred to him that his haste was quite unnecessary. The attempt at safe-breaking would not be made until the next night.

To arouse Mr. Burton at this unseemly hour would be foolish, indeed. He checked his footsteps and muttered:

"Why, I can visit him in his office to-morrow morning. It will be in good season, for the robbery is planned for the night."

He felt sorry now that he had left his warm berth in the hay-mow so soon. Indeed, he half thought of going back. But just then he heard a chuckle at his elbow.

He turned to face a youth of his own size.

"Hardy!" he exclaimed.

"Hello, Tiff!" exclaimed the wild youth. "You didn't expect to see me here, did you? Well, I can say the same of you. But what is a goody-goody chap like you doing out at this late hour?"

Tiff was for a moment vexed for a reply, then he said:

"Well, I have had my sleep. I am beginning the day early."

Hardy whistled softly and shrugged his shoulders. He peered keenly into Tiff's face.

"None of that!" he said, resolutely. "You can't fool me that way. There's something doing. I want to know what it is."

Tiff was angry. He did not like the idea of Hardy's thus prying into his affairs. He did not trust the fellow. He was resolved to tell him nothing.

"If there is anything doing it is my own affair," he said stiffly. "It is no business of yours."

"Of course not," said Hardy, with assumed indifference. "I beg your pardon! I hope you'll excuse me."

Hardy lighted a cigarette, and as Tiff was moving away, rejoined:

"I don't see why you are so confounded cool to me. I've never done you any harm. In fact, I am trying to be a friend to you, for I like you. Tug Hardy don't say that to every one, I can tell you."

There was something in Hardy's tone that smote Tiff with self-reproach. He had not meant to be unkind to him.

"Well, you see, Tug," he said plainly, "you and I are not of the same mind. Your ideas of life and mine differ."

"I suppose they do," agreed Hardy. "But I kin tell you one thing, Tiff Clark! I may be rough, and perhaps I've been a little dissipated. I smoke, and once in a while I take a glass of beer. But I never cheated anybody or stole anything in my life. If you knew the truth you wouldn't be so harsh on me." Tug drew nearer and spoke with earnestness.

"I never had any one to tell me right from wrong. You have a mother. I was brought up in the streets, and I kin tell you I've had a hard life. Of course, you have a right to feel yourself a little better——"

"No, no!" cried Tiff, hotly. "That is not so, Tug. I do not consider myself one whit better. I have many faults, but I don't wish to acquire more."

"Then you think by associating with me you'll learn bad ways."

"No. I do not," Tiff said plainly. "It is not that at all. But your tastes and mine are not the same. That's all."

"Well, why can't we be friends, anyway. If I had anybody to show me the way I'd be like you. See here, Tiff, I've taken a fancy to you. I'm only a poor boy, and I'm tryin' to get to the top just the same as you. I hain't got the training that you have, but I'd like to be better. Now, we'll be pardes if you say the word, and I'll turn over a new leaf an' quit drinking an' smoking. Honest Injun! I just want some one like you to show me the way. Take me on, Tiff. Maybe you can be the makin' of me. I'll never get up unless I get help. We can pull together and win out. I know the wicked side of the world. You know the other side. It ought to be a good partnership. What d'ye say?"

Hardy spoke earnestly and sincerely. He held out his hand, and there was a break in his voice as he concluded.

It went straight to Tiff's heart. Gone was his aversion to the sporty youth, and he saw instantly that here was an opportunity. He took Tug's hand.

"I believe you, Tug," he said. "We will be friends. I have a hard battle before me, but I am going to win. We will help each other."

"That's an eternal bargain!" cried Tug, with delight. "I'm stuck on you, Tiff. I know you're square, an' you've got grit. We can fight it out together and make men of ourselves."

"We'll certainly try."

"Good! Now come to my den an' we'll talk it all over and make plans for the future. You look dead tired."

"I am," admitted Tiff. And he permitted Tug to lead the way into a dingy side street. They entered a rickety building. In the rear Tug pushed open a door and struck a match.

He lighted a candle which showed a not very cleanly kept room. There was a pallet in one end, and a fireplace in the other. Tug threw some straw and bits of wood into the grate and lighted it. The flames leaped up the chimney and lent cheer to the scene.

It was a rude and humble refuge, but exceedingly welcome to Tiff. He threw himself down by the blaze alongside his new-found friend, and a sense of great cheer came over him.

"Old Miss Mullins owns ther house," explained Tug. "She lets me the room cheap because I saved her life once. Pulled her out from under the fender of a trolley car."

"Tug, you have a kind heart," said Tiff, earnestly. "It is good of you to take me in this way."

"Oh, I'm a whole lot bad, but I'm goin' to try an' be more like you," said Tug.

"Don't take me for a pattern," protested Tiff. "I am liable to be at fault very often."

"If I was one-half as good as you I'd never worry about my soul," said Tug. "I've heard a lot about bein' a Christian, an' one thing an' another. An' that if one don't go to church they won't succeed. I went to church over in the second precinct once, but my clothes were so bad I got ashamed and wouldn't go again. Then I j'ined in with ther Salvation Army fer a few days. But I didn't have an ear fer music, an' drifted out ag'in. I guess I was cut on ther bias an' never made to fit straight an' square anyway. But just the same, I'm going to try and be like you."

Tiff was interested and amused. He was beginning to get at the real character of this boy of the streets who had never had a chance.

"Tug, I hope I shall not set you a bad example," he said.

"I'm not afraid of that."

"Tell me all about yourself."

"Well," said Tug, as he lazily kicked a fresh piece of wood onto the fire, "there ain't much to tell, Tiff. If I hadn't been a pretty tough young mug I guess I'd have dropped out in the shuffle long ago. They have tried to down me lots of times, but I've always had a good reach and a trick of side-steppin' that has kept me up all right. I never knew my mother. She died when I was born. My father was a brick-mason, an' I lived with a family named Maguire until I was old enough to go to school. After I'd been in school three years my dad disappeared. The Maguires turned me out in the street, an' I've had to knock around and fight for myself ever since. It's no romance. That's all there is to my life."

"Well, Tug," said Tiff, sincerely, "I don't see that you have done very badly, after all. I think you have done well against such odds."

The street boy's eyes gleamed with pleasure.

"You're the only one ever said a thing like that to me," he said. "It's encouragement."

"Well, it is true."

"Thank you! Now tell me about yourself."

Tiff drew a deep breath. He felt that his own life story was fully as pathetic as that of Tug Hardy. So as the other pressed him for the story he began:

"Well, Tug, I was more fortunate than you in one respect. I have always known a mother's love and care. Until a year ago I lived home with my parents. My father was a bookkeeper, and an honest man in a position of great trust. The crime of forgery was falsely fastened upon him, and to escape prison he fled. We have not heard from him since. The fact that my father is under this shadow makes it hard for me to secure a responsible position. I came to Hildale determined to find employment. I would have secured a position with Mr. Burton but in his employ was the very man who swore against my father. His name is John Molton."

(To be continued.)

TIMELY TOPICS

Dr. F. F. Ruff was driving past the battlefield of Averasboro, N. C., recently and saw exposed a piece of iron. He stopped and discovered that it was a shell used in the Civil War. The shell is about four inches in diameter. The opening was stuffed with something similar to paper. This was removed, and it was found that the shell was loaded and the powder, when particles of it were spread upon a paper and the match applied, would burn.

A. E. Hillman, of Wakeeney, Kan., has a sore face caused by a tussle with a large catfish, which he attempted to catch with his hands while swimming. The fish was seen under a log at the edge of the creek apparently asleep. Hillman slipped his hands along the side of the fish and had almost closed his fingers through the gills when his fish-ship came to life and jumped for liberty. It struck Hillman such a blow in the face that he was thrown backward and his face badly lacerated, and then escaped.

There is now on the market an electric fan which can be operated only by placing a coin in its slot, whereupon it operates for a certain length of time, according to the amount of current which the owner desires to supply for the money paid, says the Scientific American. When a coin is dropped into the slot a clock mechanism is wound up in the base of the fan. For a nickel, for instance, the fan may operate one hour, either constantly or intermittently, according to the wishes of the user. Several coins can be dropped in at one time, insuring several hours' use of the fan.

Many remarkable instances of the recovery of soldiers of the power of speech, lost through shell shock or wounds, have been told. The latest is that of a Welshman, Private Morris, who had his voice restored in a dream. He was injured during the battle of the Somme, and on recovering consciousness found that he had lost the power of speech. While in a hospital in London he dreamed that he was back in the trenches and that a shell burst near him. He shouted at the top of his voice, and on waking, was spoken to about it. To his astonishment he found he was able to reply, and he has now completely regained his speech.

The "mile-a-minute" motor-boat has at last arrived. In the gold cup motor-boat races at Detroit, Mich., the Minneapolis smashed records excepting the half-mile, which she established in the interlake regatta in July at 66.66 miles per hour. The 30-mile mark was set at 50.5; ten miles, 55.64; five miles, 55.8, and one mile, 64.77 miles per hour. The season's winnings of the motor-boat Miss Min-

neapolis, which has beaten every record from one-half to thirty miles, were the gold challenge cup, Mississippi Valley and interlake trophies. The boat is a 20-footer, with 5 feet 7 inches beam, of the one-step hydroplane design; is powered with an eight-cylinder Sterling engine of 250 horsepower, and driven by a single propeller wheel well aft of her stern, and steers with rudder forward.

The difficulty of securing recruits for the National Guard in the Federal service is well illustrated by the experience of recruiting in the State of New York. During a recent week 46 recruits were secured in the entire State for organizations on the border, and during the week previous 65 recruits were secured. The complete record for one month's recruiting is 372 recruits. The cost to the United States Government for the officers and men on recruiting service for one month in New York State alone is approximately \$25,000. When the cost in other States is added, the cost of National Guard recruiting will rise to a fabulous sum, and it is a question how long Uncle Sam is going to stand for this big outlay. Recruiting 372 men at the rate of \$25,000 is a high price.

Each of the four battle cruisers for which bids will be opened at the Navy Department at noon on Wednesday, December 6, will be 850 feet long, or 100 feet longer than the Woolworth Building is high. The displacement of the vessels will be about 35,000 tons, their speed will be between 32 and 35 knots, and they are intended to be the most powerful of all armored cruisers. Each vessel will carry ten 14-inch guns. The Naval Appropriation bill authorizes the expenditure of not more than \$16,500,000 for each of the cruisers, exclusive of armor and armament. The armor and armament of each cruiser will cost about \$4,000,000. Plans for the battle cruisers, which were not ready on August 25, when bids were sought for most of the other new warships authorized, have now been completed, and announcement was made by Admiral William S. Benson, Chief of Naval Operations and acting Secretary of the Navy, that the proposals for battle cruisers 1 to 4 would be opened on December 6. Circulars for the information of bidders and plans and specifications are ready for distribution, and Admiral Benson announced that forms of proposal and contract might be had on application. Every effort will be made to hasten the construction of these vessels. This was evidenced by the fact that bids were opened at the Bureau of Ordnance for forgings for 24 of the 14-inch guns and 10 sets of the 5-inch guns, with which these vessels are to be armed. Bids were recently opened for 26 14-inch guns for these vessels, to be built by contract.

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Good Current News Articles

Lou Reynolds, of Merom, Ind., caught an 85-pound catfish in the Wabash River recently. When the fish was cut open a live fish, which weighed almost two pounds, flopped out. The big fish, tugging at the line, gave a signal to the fisherman, who had hung a bell on a limb to which he attached his line.

Emmette Coyle, of Newcastle, Colo., aged ten years, and his sister, aged eight years, a few days ago ran down and killed a large gray wolf without assistance. The youngsters had set traps for the pests. One animal was caught, but snapped the chain and started off with the tramp on one foot. The children followed and killed the wolf with a .22-caliber rifle.

Registration in Harvard's course in military science and tactics has been so poor that even with a campaign to encourage enlistment only 200 men have offered to serve. Eleven hundred men became members of the Harvard regiment last fall. This year a senior division of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps is established at the university; but the course does not obligate one to serve in the Army. The officers of the university are at a loss to explain the reason for the few entries this year.

Canal workers at Valentine, Neb., recently uncovered, ten feet beneath the surface, the skeleton of an Indian warrior. The overlying strata indicated that the bones had been inanimate for several hundred years. Professor Skinner of the American Indian Museum, excavating the mound at Tioga Point, near Sayre, Pa., uncovered the bones of sixty-eight men, which he estimates had been buried at least seven or eight hundred years. The average height indicated by the skeletons was seven feet, but many were taller. Evidence of the gigantic size of these men was seen in huge axes found beside the bones.

One day about six months ago Henry Heller shook hands with Warden Osborne and walked out of Sing Sing. Seventy years, half of them spent in prison, lay behind him. "You'll never see me here again, warden, unless I come as a visitor," he had said. "Old as I am, I'm going out to make good." Last night, though, Heller slept in a cell again, held to the grand jury without bail on a charge of burglary. Early in the morning he had thrown a brick threw the window of Abraham Berlin's clothing shop, at 776 Broadway, Brooklyn, and stolen \$100 worth of coats. He was arrested trying to dispose of them. "Sing Sing will be a better home than I've been able to find outside," said Heller, when arraigned in the Bedford Avenue Court. "I wanted to turn square, but I was too old. Nobody had a job for me and I had to steal. It meant a meal, whether I got away with it or not."

Grins and Chuckles

"What is the precise significance of the phrase, 'the incident is closed'?" "It's a polite way," answered Senator Sorghum, "of saying, 'What are you going to do about it?'"

"What do you know about the language of the flowers, Bill?" asked the latter's college roommate. "Well," said Bill, "I know this much about it: a five-dollar box of roses talks a heap louder to a girl than a fifty-cent bunch of carnations."

"Healthy place? I should say so! We'd have a perfect record of no deaths, if it were not for the doctors." "So it's the doctors, not the place, that is the cause of mortality?" "Nope—place." "But you said——" "Yes—place does it. It's the doctors that die off—starve to death."

"What makes you stand there watching me operate this adding machine?" asked the man in the bank. "We have so much music out home," answered the loiterer, "that it's kind of interesting to see somebody punching a lot of keys around without starting up some kind of a tune."

"Here," said Mrs. Exe, impatiently, "is another invitation from Mrs. Boreleigh, asking us to one of her bothersome dinners. I hate them." "Oh, tell her we have a previous engagement," said her husband. "No," said Mrs. Exe, virtuously. "That would be a lie. Edith, dear, write Mrs. Boreleigh that we accept with much pleasure."

A boy wanted a dog, and the rich uncle said: "Well, Eddie, suppose I give you two hundred dollars for a dog. Would you spend that whole sum in one dog, or would you buy a pretty good dog and put the rest of the money in the savings bank?" "Well, uncle," replied Eddie, "if you leave it to me, I would buy two hundred one-dollar dogs."

THE DEVIL'S POOL

By Horace Appleton.

"I am delighted to see you, my dear boy."

"Thank you, Mr. Granger."

The first speaker was a fine-looking man of perhaps forty-five; the second a young man of about twenty-three, whose frank, ingenuous face would at once have prepossessed a stranger in his favor.

The elder man was Mr. Henry Granger, a wealthy retired merchant of New York whose country-seat in the village of A——, not many miles from the city, is the scene of our story.

Mr. Granger was a man respected and honored by all who knew him.

His name, both in business and social circles, was a synonym of integrity and uprightness.

Yet there was something in his face that would have warned a careful physiognomist not to trust him too far.

His companion was Ralph Alford, the junior partner in a well-known city importing house and a man of unblemished character.

The young man had just arrived at Elmwood, as Mr. Granger's magnificent estate was called.

He came alone, but he expected to have a companion on his departure.

In plain words, Ralph Alford had come to Elmwood to be married.

His betrothed was Miss Blanche Osborn, the ward of Mr. Granger.

Miss Osborn's father had died two years before, leaving his old friend Henry Granger guardian of his daughter and her fortune.

When young Alford had asked his consent to his marriage with Miss Osborn, Mr. Granger gave it cheerfully and unhesitatingly.

And now Ralph Alford had come to claim his bride.

On the day following his arrival at Elmwood they were to be married.

"'Twill be a heavy blow to me to lose my ward," said Mr. Granger, as he led his companion into the elegant drawing-room, "but there is no one to whom I would sooner resign her than yourself."

At this moment the young lady in question entered the room, and Mr. Granger discreetly took his departure.

As lovers' meetings do not usually possess much interest to any save the two immediately concerned, we will accompany Mr. Granger from the room.

The millionaire and his guest next met at the dinner-table.

"By the way, Ralph," remarked Mr. Granger, "perhaps you would like to take a stroll about the estate with me after dinner."

"I shall be pleased to do so."

"There are many objects of interest on the grounds," resumed the elder man, "among them the

famous natural cave of which you have perhaps heard."

"Oh, yes!" was the reply; "its reputation has reached me, and I have long been anxious to visit it."

"I will accompany you thither after dinner. It is really a remarkable freak of nature, and its presence on my grounds attracts crowds of curiosity seekers daily. But I never admit them, for I don't choose to turn my estate into a museum. So you may consider yourself a privileged character, my dear fellow—ha, ha, ha!"

"If you go, Ralph," interposed Miss Osborn, "be careful not to go too near the Devil's Pool."

"The Devil's Pool?" repeated the young man, wonderingly.

"The Devil's Pool," said Mr. Granger, with a smile, "is the name given to a subterranean stream beneath the cave, and visible at one point through a small opening. It is, as I have found, absolutely fathomless. You must be careful, my dear boy, as Blanche says, not to go too near the dangerous spot, for should you fall in, no power on earth could rescue you, and your body could never be recovered."

"I am really quite curious to see the place," said Alford, "and will accompany you there whenever you are ready."

"Let us go at once then, if you have finished your meal," returned Mr. Granger, rising from his seat.

There was something so peculiar in his tone and manner that his ward looked curiously and inquiringly into his face.

His appearance was that of a man struggling with some great internal excitement.

There was a flush upon his cheek, and his eyes blazed with a strange fire.

But Alford did not appear to notice anything unusual in his host's demeanor, as, with a gay "au revoir" to his intended, he followed Mr. Granger from the room.

After a few minutes' stroll through the elegantly laid-out grounds, the two gentlemen arrived at the entrance to the miniature natural cave.

It was almost concealed by shrubbery, and would not have been noticed by an ordinary passer-by.

"How are we to get down?" inquired Alford, looking doubtfully into a dark opening in the rocks.

"Easily enough," returned his companion, lighting a torch with which he had provided himself. "There is a rough but secure stairway by which we can descend. I'll lead the way."

With these words Mr. Granger disappeared from view in the entrance of the cave.

The young man immediately followed him down the rocky stairway which the light of the torch revealed.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Mr. Granger, presently, as the last stair was reached.

Alford glanced around and found himself in a narrow passageway cut in the solid rock by the mysterious hand of nature.

"Now, Alford, we are alone in the bowels of the earth," continued the elder man, fixing a peculiar, penetrating glance upon the face of his companion. "Alone, out of reach of human hearing or sight. Tradition says, Alford, that a murder was once committed in this place, and one man lured another to the edge of the Devil's Pool and threw him in, and that long years elapsed before the crime was revealed. The story may not be true, but it is a possible one, eh, Alford?"

"Quite possible," rejoined the young man. "But where is this Devil's Pool, Mr. Granger?"

"I will conduct you to it."

Alford followed his companion through the long passageway.

At the end of perhaps five minutes Mr. Granger made a sudden turn to the left, and ushered the young man into an immense subterranean cavern; the high ceiling of which was lost in the gloom which filled the place.

"This," said Mr. Granger, securing his torch in a crevice in the ground, "is the cave proper, and here is the Devil's Pool."

So saying he advanced to the center of the cave and paused before an opening in the ground, perhaps twelve feet in circumference.

The young man advanced to his side.

Looking down he saw, fifteen feet below, the dark water of the Devil's Pool.

"The place is inaptly named," remarked Granger; "it is not a pool, but a running stream of water. The body of the unfortunate man of whom I told you was borne swiftly away by a powerful underground current, of the existence of which you may be at once convinced if you will look down at the water again."

The young man bent down and fixed his eyes upon the surface of the subterranean stream.

At this moment he received a violent push, which almost sent him headlong into the opening.

But by a strong effort he regained his balance and sprang to his feet.

He turned to Granger, hardly realizing what had happened, half thinking that the blow he had received had been an accidental one.

But the elder man's eyes glared upon him with an expression that was not to be mistaken—an expression of the bitterest hatred and anger.

Before Alford could move, he sprang forward and hurled him to the ground, holding him in such a position that he could scarcely move a muscle.

"Ralph Alford!" he hissed, "I brought you to this place to murder you, as years ago that man was murdered whose very name has long since been forgotten."

"Granger, are you mad?" gasped the young man.

"Mad!" was the fierce rejoinder. "No. You think so, perhaps, because you know not the motive that prompts me to the deed which I have sworn to accomplish. Ralph Alford, I, too, love Blanche Os-

born; I love her with an intensity of which your shallow nature is incapable. She might have been mine ere this, had you not in an evil hour appeared to thwart my plans. But I am a man not easily turned from my purpose. Years ago I swore that Blanche Osborn should some day become my wife, and I have never for an instant relaxed my determination to fulfill my oath. You are the one obstacle in my path, and thus do I remove you!"

With these words he dragged the body of the young man to the very edge of the Devil's Pool.

Alford heard the rush of the mysterious waters below as they swept on to their unknown destination.

With a herculean effort he partially released himself from the powerful grasp of his assailant, and sprang to his feet.

Then began a terrible struggle upon the edge of the Devil's Pool.

The two men were well-matched, and each exerted himself to his utmost.

Presently Granger succeeded in grasping his opponent's throat in one of his large and powerful hands.

In vain did the young man struggle to free himself; the terrible clutch upon his windpipe was maintained, and he saw that he was in imminent danger of being strangled by his desperate assailant.

At last, after many efforts, he succeeded in freeing one of his hands, which he instantly thrust into his breast pocket.

He drew his revolver.

His motive was not to kill his assailant, but to stun him with a blow upon the head.

Granger anticipated his intention, and frantically sought to grasp the weapon.

To do this he was obliged to release for a moment his clutch upon the young man's throat.

This movement put Alford in the most favorable position he had had since the beginning of the struggle, and he quickly perceived his advantage.

With a dexterous movement of his foot he threw Granger to the ground.

Though the elder man received a severe blow upon the head by the fall, he was instantly upon his feet again.

With a wild cry of rage, he rushed fiercely toward the young man.

But, blinded by the blood which flowed copiously from a cut in his forehead, he stumbled upon the very edge of the Devil's Pool, and fell down into the dark waters of the mysterious stream.

There was a loud splash, a terrible cry of agony, and then all was silent.

The body of Henry Granger was never found.

Ralph Alford and Blanche Osborn have been husband and wife many years now, and Ralph often tells his children, as with bated breath they cluster around him, the story of his terrible struggle upon the brink of the Devil's Pool.

FROM ALL POINTS

POTASH FROM KELP.

That the Department of Agriculture has not lost interest in the project of utilizing the great Pacific coast kelp-beds as a source of potash on a commercial scale is shown by the fact that, out of a special appropriation of \$175,000 just secured for investigating American sources of potash, an experimental and demonstration plant for the extraction of potash salts from kelp will shortly be erected. The site is not yet announced, but it will be on the Pacific coast, where kelp may be harvested two or three times a year.

VALUABLE CLAY DISCOVERED.

The United States Bureau of Standards is proving an efficient help to business men and manufacturers throughout the country. Examples of this are coming to light every day. Just recently a Florida man conceived the idea that a clay cup for getting turpentine from the trees might prove better than those used at present, especially since the present ones, made from another material, are causing much trouble.

He sent a sample of the clay on his property to the Bureau to see if turpentine cups could be made from it. Not only were some very fine cups made and sent to him, but experts at the Bureau of Standards discovered that the clay was of an excellent quality for the making of vitrified paving brick. As a result of this the Florida man is going to sell his land at a good figure to a brick concern located in his State.

NEW WORK OF THE WEATHER BUREAU.

With the aid of an addition of \$30,000 to its appropriation, the Weather Bureau is preparing to extend materially its field of observation and its storm-warning service in the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf region. A number of new stations will be established, and headquarters of this branch of the service will be located in the Canal Zone. The Bureau originally organized a West Indian service in 1898, during the Spanish-American War, especially for the purpose of safeguarding the American fleet from the hurricanes which are such a notable and dangerous feature of West Indian weather. After the war the service was maintained on a reduced scale. The opening of the Panama Canal, with the consequent increase of shipping in American tropical waters, makes a more efficient lookout for hurricanes imperative. The current appropriation also provides funds for improving the meteorological and climatological work in Alaska. Telegraphic reports from Alaska are found very useful in connection with forecasts for the United States.

FOUND 400 GERMANS HIDDEN IN TUNNEL.

How the village of Chilly was taken from the Germans in one brilliant dash by French regiments was related by participants in the action to the correspondent of The Associated Press when he visited that position, which is one of the most important on the allied line.

The artillery preparation was unrelenting, the shower of projectiles of all calibers lasting for two days. Then the French, who had assembled in the most advanced dugouts, dashed out. The first wave reached and cleared the German front. The wave of French then partly crept, partly ran in short bursts to the second German line, and the second wave of French troops advanced in support.

Meanwhile, from somewhere underground, a large body of Germans came between with machine guns and grenades. The French hesitated an instant, but were not stayed. They bayoneted some of the Germans, the rest of whom disappeared into a tunnel. Calls to surrender availed nothing, and it was an impossible task to follow. Then the French built a sandbag redoubt around the tunnel and waited.

The first French wave went on and took the second and third German lines within Chilly itself. Then, from the other end, the tunnel began to disgorge troops, whose exit was brought to an end by a French detachment.

Germans in an unknown number were still in the tunnel in the rear and obstinately refused to surrender. Eighteen hours they held out until a captured wounded German was sent in to inform them that the French would shell them out. Thereupon they were sorted in groups until more than 400 men and ten officers were captured.

The Associated Press correspondent went through the tunnel, which is nearly 1,000 yards in length, with an 18-inch railroad track running from beginning to end. Within, at a depth of twelve yards, were sleeping quarters, munition depots, an infirmary, with the most modern surgical instruments, fresh-water wells, tons of equipment, electric lights and ventilation pipes. The sides and roof were boarded up and it was possible to walk nearly upright, although at some places it was necessary to crouch, and many parts were inundated.

The entrance to the tunnel was toward Maucourt, the exit in the center of Chilly, where was found the German commandant's apartment of several rooms, with painted walls, solid doors, chairs, tables, beds, and telephone system. At a depth of forty feet was an excavation sufficiently large to hold a whole company of soldiers, with hoists for machines.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

SPARROWS STOP CITY GAS.

Two little sparrows caused every gas user in Menominee to go without gas for several hours, says The Milwaukee Sentinel. The birds built their nests in the outlet pipe of the water tank through which the gas is passed. During the heavy rain the tank overflowed because the nest clogged the outlet pipe. The overflowing of the tank disarranged the apparatus and shut off the gas. The nest was removed later and the gas supply restored.

MILKING MACHINES IN SWEDEN.

Four different types of milking machines have been tested at the Agricultural and Dairy College at Akarp, Sweden, of which three were Swedish and one Danish. One of the Swedish manufacturers reports that he has supplied more than 100 machine-milking plants in Sweden by which between 4,000 and 5,000 cows are milked daily. It is claimed that one person can attend to six machines, milking from 30 to 35 cows per hour; as a rule it requires one machine for every 10 to 12 cows, or four machines for 40 to 50 cows. In certain cases the final stripping is done by hand. Electric energy, horse-power, or other motive power may be used.

STONES, INSTEAD OF STRINGS, IN PIANO.

Carefully selected stones of a special kind take the place of metallic strings in a large musical instrument used in the home of a New Hampshire man. Although it is double the size of one, its cabinet and also the keyboard are similar in appearance to an old-fashioned square piano. Some seventeen years were spent by the owner in constructing the device, which he calls a "rockophone." The tones are said by those who have heard them to be bell-like in their clearness and resonance. Almost any piano selection of average range can be rendered on the instrument, asserts Popular Mechanics. Literally thousands of stones were gathered and tested before the set of forty-three now in use was completed. Each of these is of volcanic origin and produces a clear, liquid tone when struck. Short, narrow stones comprise those used in the upper register, while the bass members are each about two feet long and one foot wide. They are arranged in two tiers on special mountings in the cabinet and struck by wooden hammers operated by the piano keys. If desired, the instrument may also be played with mallets, the same as a xylophone. Its owner-builder values it quite highly.

CITY HEATED BY NATURE.

Boise, the capital of Idaho, is the only city in the world to use natural hot water supply heat to

houses, public buildings and business blocks. Water at a temperature of 171 degrees Fahrenheit comes from wells in the low foothills of the Boise Mountains just outside the city, and for twenty-five years it has all been used for heating purposes.

There are two wells, each 18 inches in diameter and 400 feet deep. The natural flow is only 800,000 gallons a day. Centrifugal pumps have increased the supply to 1,250,000 gallons every day. The water is pumped into a tank or reservoir, and thence distributed to the users in the city. One hundred and thirty-nine buildings use it for all purposes, including heat, and 100 other buildings use it for bathing, washing and cooking purposes, says Youth's Companion.

Engineers have tried to increase the flow of water, and they think that if they could trap the main subterranean stream they would get enough hot water to supply all the needs of the city. The heat is so intense that men can work only 18 feet below the surface, and then only in ten-minute shifts.

These hot springs were well known by the Indians, and they made the spot where Boise now stands a sort of winter resort for the Snake and Bannock tribes.

BLOWPIPES GOOD WEAPONS.

Although one of the simplest of weapons, the blowpipes used by the Land Dyaks of Sarawak, North Borneo, require more skill in the making than any other instrument or implement of a primitive people, says The Popular Science Monthly.


No thin sapling sufficiently straight or strong for a blowpipe is to be found in the forests of Borneo, so the laborious method of working down a large piece of wood has to be resorted to. The wood most favored is called yong by the natives. It is heavier than water, and of very tough texture, but it is fairly easily worked, even after a couple of years' seasoning. The young log is rigged up vertically in a scaffolding, and almost on a level with the upper end of it is a platform, upon which the driller stands. The task of the latter is to run a perfectly straight hole three-eighths of an inch in diameter through the whole length of the log.

As the hole deepens, longer handles are attached to the chisel blade, the last being as long as the log itself. The driller is invariably an old man, with years of experience. Considering his long training, the accuracy of his work is remarkable. Only after the hole is completed, tested and found true is the less careful, but still laborious, work of shaping down the outside of the log taken up. This is done first with axes, then with a parang, or native knife, and finally by scraping.



The Bottle Imp.—The peculiarity of this little bottle is that it cannot be made to lie down, and yet by simply passing the hand over it, the performer causes it to do so. This trick affords great amusement, and is of convenient size to carry about. Price 10c.

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This is one of the greatest musical instruments ever invented. It is made entirely of metal and is almost invisible when in use. With it, in a few moments, you can learn to play all kinds of tunes, have lots of fun, please and amuse your friends and make some money, too. Fine for either song or piano accompaniment or by itself alone. You place the whistle in the mouth with half circle out, place end of tongue to rounded part and blow gently as if to cool the lips. A few trials will enable one to play any tune or air. Price 6 cents each by mail, post-paid.

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